

NERVE

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ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?

NOTE:

NERVE is a film about technology and our addiction to it: the internet, cell phones, reality television, gaming, texting, YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter -- and on and on.

The game of NERVE relies on many of these outlets and the film should feel like the experience of using them. Quick, immediate gratification. For clarity, in the screenplay:

- When we see IPHONE VIDEO, it will be *italicized*.
- When we see TEXT that appears on screen, it will be **BOLD**.
- When we see videos posted on the NERVE web site, each will be stamped with a chyron on the top left:

NAME OF CONTESTANT, city
DARE #
NUMBER OF WATCHERS

FADE IN:

SYDNEY'S IPHONE VIDEO:

SYD, nyc
DARE #3
5,523 WATCHERS

A voluptuous Blonde cheerleader SYDNEY ST. JAMES (17) speaks DIRECTLY INTO THE LENS. Since she holds the phone, the FRAME is slightly off, shaky. Her voice energized, breathless.

SYDNEY

Hi NERVE Watchers. This is my third Dare. The prize is headshots with a celebrity New York photographer. As you know, the Final Round is tonight so please, tell all your friends to sign up. Thanks for making my dream come true.

She blows an air kiss into the lens. The IMAGE SWINGS AROUND as she passes the camera to VEE SMITH (17), whom we barely catch in passing. Only STRANGE ANGLES and BLURRY SHAPES as the camera struggles to AUTOFOCUS.

SYDNEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's recording. Vee, take it.

VEE (O.S.)

I have a bad feeling about this.

We hear a MARCHING BAND start up "Party Rock" by LMFAO.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Too late. You promised.

The CAMERA RE-FRAMES as Sydney runs out to join her CHEERLEADING SQUAD center court. We are --

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- GYMNASIUM -- DAY

-- at a pep rally in a public high school in Riverdale, NY. The CHEERLEADING SQUAD performs an overtly sexy routine to "Party People", with their captain Sydney front and center. She has star quality and sex appeal.

COACH (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, finishing a banner season 28-1, please welcome your All-State Champions: the Lincoln Falcons!

The students cheer as BASKETBALL PLAYERS jog out in uniform. But the CAMERA STAYS WITH SYDNEY.

CHEERLEADERS

F-A-L!

(clap, clap, clap)

C-O-N!

(clap, clap, clap)

SPREAD YOUR WINGS!

GOOOOOOOOOO, FALCONS!

As the Cheerleaders strike their final pose, Sydney lifts her skirt FLASHING HER NAKED ASS to the crowd. A pink blob of flesh as the LENS STRUGGLES TO FOCUS.

The kids go insane, especially the boys. The LENS SWINGS AROUND to capture the crowd. The VIDEO suddenly CUTS OUT.

BLACKNESS. SILENCE.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY (PRE-LAP)

I want to tell you something about
the internet.

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- PRINCIPAL HENLEY'S OFFICE -- DAY

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

It's unforgiving. Far more
unforgiving than I am.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY (50s, austere) addresses Sydney primarily. But beside Sydney is her videographer and best friend --

VEE SMITH (17). Our heroine. Vee wears vintage clothes, tortoise shell glasses and her hair in loose braids. She could be stunning, but for now her image is "smart, quirky, alternative." Tina Fey meets Annie Hall.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY (CONT'D)

And you won't always be seventeen.
Someday you'll be somebody's wife
or somebody's mother --

SYDNEY

Oh, I'm not having kids. Maybe I'll
adopt when I'm forty --

VEE

(sotto)

Sydney, stop.

Sydney shoots Vee a withering look. This is their dynamic. Sydney pushes boundaries and Vee tries to rein her in.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

My point is you don't think ahead.
The choices you make now can impact
the rest of your life. The texting
and the tweeting and the status
updates. There are predators --

The door flings open. It's Vee's mother NANCY SMITH (40s),
still in her nurse scrubs. She's scrappy, exhausted, real.

NANCY

Sorry. I had to call in a sub and
then my car broke down and I had to
wait for triple A.
(to Vee)
So what was this stunt you pulled?

SYDNEY

(protecting Vee)
It was my stunt, Nancy.

NANCY

Surprise, surprise.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

I have a meeting in ten minutes, so
I'll give you the quick recap.
Sydney "exposed" herself at the pep
rally today and Vee filmed it. I'm
giving them a three day suspension.

NANCY

Suspension?! No. That can't happen.

As Nancy goes off, Sydney slyly checks a TEXT on her phone:

NERVE:

**CONGRATULATIONS, SYD!
YOU WON YOUR HEADSHOTS
AND YOU HAVE 852 NEW WATCHERS**

NANCY

Vee got in early to NYU. She's a
straight A student. A.P. classes,
editor of the school paper --

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

Then she should know better.

NANCY

Sydney acts out to get attention --

VEE

Mom, stop --

SYDNEY

We get it, Nancy. Vee: good.
Sydney: bad.

(to Henley)

I asked Vee to film me and I didn't
tell her what I was gonna do. Just
suspend me. Leave her out of it.

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

Fine. Starting Monday, you're
suspended for three days.

VEE

No. I knew what she was doing. We
should both be suspended.

SYDNEY

The man made a decision. It's fine.

NANCY

Exactly. Let's go.

Sydney walks out. Vee lingers to plead with Henley.

VEE

Can I please have one more minute?

PRINCIPAL HENLEY

I think we're done here.

VEE

Thirty seconds and I'll go.
(he sighs, indulging)
Sydney's been my best friend since
third grade. She acts tough to
protect herself. But I promise, she
heard every word you said. And
you're right, Mr. Henley. We didn't
think this through and we have to
be more careful. I knew the pep
rally was a bad idea and I should
have talked her out of it.

NANCY

Why is that your job?

VEE

If you could please let us both off
with a warning, I promise, nothing
like this will ever happen again.

Off Henley, having a hard time refusing this girl --

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Vee and Nancy head down the hall together.

NANCY

You know what Sydney has that you don't? A trust fund. She can afford to screw up. You can't. And by the way, you're grounded.

VEE

But it's the last Falcons game of the season and I'm covering it --

NANCY

No, you're not. You'll be doing laundry tonight.

As they pass an ADJOINING HALL, Vee spots her close friend TOMMY MANCUSO (17). Tight jeans, ripped chucks, unwashed hair hanging in his eyes. He pretends to deal with his locker.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Maybe I should go to NYU. Let you change bedpans for a while.

Nancy pushes through the DOUBLE GLASS DOORS out to --

EXT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- PARKING LOT -- DAY

Nancy walks and talks fast, with Vee in tow.

NANCY

'Cause eleven years of that has made one thing clear. There are two kinds of people: doctors and nurses. Doctors make orders and nurses follow them. Believe me, Vee, you don't want to be standing in my orthopedic shoes. Forty years old, wondering what happened.

VEE

(for the 100th time)
That's why I'm going to medical school.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Yo, Vee!

Nancy and Vee turn to find Tommy in the glass entryway.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Mr. Klein wants you back in French.
You're the only one who knows the
words to the Marseillaise.

NANCY

Go. Someday you'll take me to Paris
and order me -- French Fries.

Vee manages a smile as Nancy pulls her into a tight hug.

NANCY (CONT'D)

And you are grounded. Frozen pizza
for dinner. See you in the morning.

Vee watches her mother climb into a beat-to-shit RED MUSTANG,
circa 2002. It sputters and clunks as Nancy pumps the gas.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I'm fine. Go to class!

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Vee follows Tommy back inside and down the hallway.

VEE

The Marseillaise, huh? Thanks,
Tommy. I owe you one.

TOMMY

I'll put it on your tab.

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- CAFETERIA -- DAY

Lunchtime rush. Sydney is at a table by the window with
fraternal twins LIV and WES FRANKLIN, both 17. Liv is
heavysset, but funny and confident. Wes is openly gay, good-
looking, stylish. They all crowd around --

A LAPTOP COMPUTER displaying the slick **NERVE** WEB SITE.

On the left side, is a banner that reads **LOOK WHO'S PLAYING**
above a PATCHWORK OF FACES. Most of them have RED EXES
through them, for players who have been disqualified.

On the right side is a vertical scroll of **WATCHER COMMENTS**
constantly updating and identified by User: **Watch jimmy b.,**
i'd eat shit for a Prius, angie's a fatass, xander's a pussy.

On the bottom is a DIGITAL CLOCK counting down the hours to:
NYC FINAL ROUND. It currently reads: **10:36:24.**

Wes scrolls through **LOOK WHO'S PLAYING** and clicks on **SYD**.

SYD, nyc
DARE #3
6,375 WATCHERS

Her three previous dares line up across the screen from left to right. The pep rally CLIP, #3, is last.

WES
It's uploaded, Syd. Your ass has gone global.

SYDNEY
Good. I got suspended over that.

LIV
What?!

SYDNEY
If I make the final round, it'll all be worth it.

WES
Have you seen that guy Phil? With the soup and the dog?

Wes scrolls through the faces to find:

PHIL, nyc
DARE #3
1,235 Watchers

Phil is on all fours on the kitchen floor while his Golden Retriever drinks out of his mouth.

The group GROANS and LAUGHS as Vee and Tommy join them.

VEE
(to Sydney)
You're not suspended. I talked him out of it.

Sydney throws an arm around Vee and makes a big show of covering her face with kisses while Vee giggles and squirms.

SYDNEY
You're a goddess. A brilliant, brown-nosing goddess who I love.

Sydney glowers at Tommy who would give anything to grab Vee.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
What did you think of my ass?

TOMMY

A little hairy for my taste --

VEE

So you're done with NERVE, right?

SYDNEY

No way. I have two dares left to qualify for the finals. And the girl who won Chicago just signed with an agent. Look, I know you don't get this, 'cause you like to stay in your comfort zone --

VEE

That's not true.

(off her look)

What about that pole dancing class?

SYDNEY

(warmly teasing)

I dragged you there and you sat on the side and watched.

VEE

I'm a visual learner.

SYDNEY

Okay. What about the internship with the Times?

LIV

You got it? And you didn't tell us?

Vee throws a nasty look to Sydney for "outing" her.

VEE

I don't know if I'm taking it.

WES

Um, hello, it's The New York Times.

SYDNEY

Vee would rather eat glass than ask Nancy to sign the permission slip.

VEE

That's not true. It doesn't pay anything and print journalism is becoming a dinosaur --

SYDNEY

Then why did you apply?

TOMMY

What are you, the Gestapo?

SYDNEY

I'm saying this out of love. Vee's an amazing writer. But what's she going to write about if she can't take a risk?

VEE

I take risks, Sydney.

Sydney gestures across the cafeteria to a TABLE OF FALCONS PLAYERS. Among them are Power Forward MATT RYAN, a popular girl-magnet, and Point Guard CHUCK O'NEILL, pug-nosed, rowdy.

SYDNEY

You've had a crush on Matt Ryan for two years and you've never said hello. Go say hello.

VEE

We're graduating. It's too late.

SYDNEY

It's never too late.

Sydney turns on her heels and heads toward the Falcon table.

VEE

Sydney, don't. Please don't.

Sydney CROSSES THE CAFETERIA. The Falcons applaud her.

CHUCK

Show us the front this time.

SYDNEY

You first, Chucky. Hey, Matt. Are you dating anyone? It's not for me. It's for a friend.

MATTHEW

Which friend?

ANGLE ON VEE

-- burning as Sydney points at her. The look on Matt Ryan's face is a mix of disappointment and discomfort.

CHUCK

(yelling)

Little Vee!? Matt's a Power Forward. He'll crush you.

The entire cafeteria has now tuned in. Vee is ready to die.

SYDNEY

You're a douchebag, Chuck.

CHUCK

I'd like to be your douchebag.

As Sydney crosses the room, Vee grabs her bag and takes off.

SYDNEY

Vee, come on. It was a joke.

EXT. RIVERDALE STREETS -- DAY

Vee BIKES home as fast as her legs will carry her.
SUPERIMPOSE TEXT FROM:

SYDNEY:

U love me, remember? call me back!

EXT. RIVERDALE TENEMENT -- DAY

Vee arrives at their run-down tenement. A bunch of PUNK SKATEBOARDERS get high and do tricks. Vee locks up her bike.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Vee shuts the door and BOLT LOCKS it. The apartment is modest but homey. A hodgepodge of Ikea and Salvation Army. BASKETS OF DIRTY LAUNDRY wait by the door to be dealt with.

INT. VEE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

All we hear is the CLICK OF FINGERS ON A KEYBOARD and Vee's meditative breathing as she "connects." This is how we soothe ourselves, our drug, as addictive as cocaine. Vee's computer is out-of-date. One of those candy colored iMacs of yore.

In the search bar, she types **WWW.THISISME.COM** (our FACEBOOK).

VEE SMITH'S HOME PAGE COMES UP. Among the details...

HOMETOWN: RIVERDALE, NEW YORK.

RELATIONSHIP STATUS: NONEXISTENT.

FAVORITE BANDS: MUSE, KINGS OF LEON, THE ROLLING STONES

FAVORITE WRITERS: DOSTOEVSKY, NABOKOV, KEROUAC, SEDARIS

She's "pinned" a MACBOOK AIR LAPTOP and labeled it **lustworthy**
An IM message pops up in the middle of the screen.

DAD:
HI SWEETIE. WANNA SEE YOUR BROTHER?

THEN A PHOTO OF A MESSY, GRINNING TEN-MONTH-OLD BABY
Vee smiles wistfully -- her dad has a new family.

VEE:
CUTE. HOW ARE YOU?

DAD:
**TIRED BUT OK. COME VISIT THIS
SUMMER. MY TREAT ;)**

VEE:
**NOT SURE I CAN. I GOT AN INTERNSHIP
AT THE NEW YORK TIMES.**

DAD:
CONGRATS! MAYBE YOU'RE THE WRITER.

Vee's smile flags; her father had major aspirations. She gets
an idea and taps away on the keyboard:

VEE:
CAN YOU SIGN THE PERMISSION SLIP?

DAD:
I CAN'T. LEGALLY. DID MOM SAY NO?

VEE:
NOT YET. BUT SHE WILL.

Her cell phone CHIMES with a TEXT:

LIV:
**Syd's a bitch
come to the game**

Vee doesn't respond. Her dad IMs again.

DAD:
GOT A BOYFRIEND YET?

Yet. Vee laughs bitterly. It's a conspiracy.

VEE:
NOPE. GOTTA RUN. BYE, DAD.

Vee CLOSES the IM WINDOW. In the SEARCH BAR, she types:

WWW.NERVEGAME.COM

The home page for NERVE comes up with the banner:

ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?

Under it are two options:

BECOME A WATCHER

BECOME A PLAYER

Vee studies the choices as if her whole life could be summed up in this simple paradigm. She takes a deep breath and clicks on **BECOME A PLAYER**.

**NERVE:
WELCOME TO NERVE, VEE.
PLEASE ENTER YOUR
THISISME USERNAME AND PASSWORD.**

Vee's chilled. In the USERNAME box, she types: **L-O-L-I-T-A**. Before she enters her password, the DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Vee opens the door. It's Tommy.

TOMMY
The next time Sydney flashes her ass, I'll bring my branding iron. I just wanted to check on you.

VEE
(getting an idea)
I'm glad you came. I need a favor.

INT. VEE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Vee has just told Tommy her plan. He's pacing, manic.

TOMMY
Are you crazy? Some kid in Seattle killed himself three days after the Final Round.

VEE
Maybe he was bipolar.

TOMMY
Or maybe NERVE tortures kids for entertainment. Like the Romans tortured the Christians.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(she laughs)

Vee, I'm serious. NERVE is evil --

VEE

It's a game. If anything bad happens, they'll get shut down.

TOMMY

That's the thing. No one knows who "they" are. They use offshore bank accounts and web servers in Asia --

VEE

Wait, how do you know all this?

TOMMY

I read about it on SLASHDOT.

SYDNEY

Then why did you let Sydney play?

TOMMY

'Cause I don't care about Sydney.

The air is thick between them. Tommy changes the subject.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

And the final round isn't posted so no one really knows what goes on there. They pick some pop-up location and text you the address 20 minutes before. Oh, and you have to pay a thousand bucks to watch --

VEE

I'm not going to the final round. I just want to try an entry dare.

TOMMY

Why? To prove Sydney wrong?

VEE

No. It's not about Sydney. Haven't you ever wanted to do something crazy just to see what happens?

Tommy absorbs this question, looking into her big doe eyes. All he wants to do is grab her and kiss her. But he can't.

TOMMY

In second grade, I put a staple through my thumb. Is that the kind of crazy you mean?

Vee laughs and pecks him on the cheek. He blushes.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What was that for?

VEE

For being you. And for giving me a ride. My dare starts in 15 minutes.

TOMMY

What? No. We're supposed to cover the Falcons game.

VEE

And we will. This won't take long.

TOMMY

No. No way. I can't support this. NERVE capitalizes on the greed and stupidity of the American teenager -

VEE

Tell me all about it in the car.

Vee grabs her things and leaves. Tommy sighs, resigned.

JEN'S IPHONE VIDEO:

JEN, nyc

DARE #4

7,629 WATCHERS

In a drugstore aisle is JEN (21) -- a cool Asian girl with a pink Mohawk and piercings. Jen whispers INTO THE LENS --

JEN

Hey, NERVE Watchers, this is Jen, Dare Number Four, playing to win studio time for my band.

Jen cranes to eye the heavysset CLERK behind the counter.

JEN (CONT'D)

Luckily, Charles-in-Charge hasn't been to the gym in a while.

Her girlfriend MICKI (21) giggles off screen. The CAMERA TILTS UP to capture a giant Easter Basket on the top shelf.

JEN (CONT'D)

'Course it would be on the top shelf. Wish me luck, Bitches.

Jen GRABS the Easter Basket and BOLTS.

CLERK (O.S.)
Hey! What's goin' on there?

An ALARM goes off. The CAMERA LENS swings to the floor capturing the stampede of feet and hard breathing --

THROUGH THE STORE and OUT ONTO THE STREET

MICKI (O.S.)
Jen, wait! My shoes --

JEN (O.S.)
Let's go, let's go!

The video abruptly CUTS OUT. We are --

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- GIRLS LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

In her cheerleading uniform, Sydney watches the CLIP of Jen's dare on her iPhone. Other CHEERLEADERS suit up around her including DANA (17, perky).

SYDNEY
I hate this girl.

DANA
Which girl?

SYDNEY
(showing her the phone)
Jen Somebody. She has two thousand more Watchers than me and she's clearly a lesbian.

DANA
Maybe her Watchers are lesbians.

Sydney TEXTS **Vee**.

SYDNEY:
i'm sorry, okay?
meet us at the party!

INT. TOMMY'S CAR (MOVING) -- RIVERDALE -- NIGHT

Tommy drives, Vee's shotgun. She reads the INCOMING TEXT.

VEE
It's Sydney. Swear to me you won't tell her about this.

TOMMY

I won't have to. She's watching
NERVE twenty-four seven.

VEE

Oh, God --

TOMMY

Yup, you're her competition.

VEE

No I'm not. I'm only doing the
first dare.

TOMMY

You sound like a future heroin
addict. So what's gonna happen at
the Rosewood Diner?

VEE

(reading off her phone)

**GO TO THE FIRST BOOTH ON THE LEFT.
SHOUT "YOU'RE THE BEST LOVER I EVER HAD!"
KISS THE PERSON ON THE LIPS FOR 3 SECONDS.
PRIZE: \$100 DOLLARS.**

TOMMY

You're gonna kiss a total stranger
for a hundred bucks? I'll give you
a hundred bucks --

VEE

That's not the point.

TOMMY

What if it's an old woman? With
dirty dentures?

VEE

Pucker up.

TOMMY

You sound like Sydney.

VEE

Piss off.

(reading new TEXT)

**RULE #1. YOU ARE A WILLING
PARTICIPANT AND WAIVE ALL CLAIMS
AGAINST NERVE AND ITS ASSOCIATES.
RULE #2. YOU CANNOT TELL THE TARGET
OF THE DARE THAT YOU ARE PLAYING A
GAME.**

(MORE)

VEE (CONT'D)

**RULE #3. DOWNLOAD THE NERVE APP TO
CAPTURE ALL VIDEO SO IT CANNOT BE
ALTERED.**

TOMMY

Why not hand them a key to your
front door while you're at it?

EXT. ROSEWOOD DINER -- MAIN STREET -- NIGHT

Tommy and Vee approach the old-school Rosewood Diner. Vee
lingers outside to scope out her target through the glass.

VEE

First booth on the left.

Her gaze alights on IAN (20s). A girl's fantasy and a
mother's nightmare. Chiseled features, piercing eyes and a
rock star vibe. He's alone and reading a worn paperback.

VEE (CONT'D)

That guy? He's gorgeous! He
probably dates supermodels.

TOMMY

Definitely. And if we leave now, we
can still make it by half-time.

Vee checks her reflection in the window. She takes off her
EYE GLASSES and hands them to Tommy.

VEE

Here. Hold these for me.

TOMMY

(pocketing them)
Great. Now you're legally blind and
you shaved ten points off your IQ.

Not listening, Vee enters the diner. Tommy huffs and follows.

INT. ROSEWOOD DINER -- NIGHT

Vee hands Tommy her iPhone and gestures to the right.

VEE

Sit over there. And give me a nod
when you're rolling.

TOMMY

What is this, Mission Impossible?

Tommy gets into position and hits RECORD as Vee walks away.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Hello, NERVE Watchers, you pervy freaks. You're about to see an awesome girl debase herself for a measly hundred bucks. Enjoy.

He nods to Vee who has now reached --

IAN'S BOOTH

Ian looks up at Vee quizzically. Her voice squeaks out.

VEE

Wh -- what are you reading?

Ian holds up his book.

IAN

Lolita. Do you know it?

VEE

That's my favorite book.

ANGLE ON TOMMY

TOMMY

You must be cartooning.

BACK TO IAN'S BOOTH

IAN

Yeah? It's kind of twisted. With the whole pedophile thing...

VEE

I know, but some critics say Lolita isn't a real girl. She's a metaphor for the English language. It was Nabokov's first book in English --
(hearing herself)
Sorry. I read the annotated version.

IAN

I'll check it out. Is that what you came over here to tell me?

VEE

No. I -- I just wanted to say...

Vee glances back at Tommy. He flashes his eyes at her. Vee sucks in a deep breath and lets it rip:

VEE (CONT'D)
YOU'RE THE BEST LOVER I EVER HAD!

HALF THE DINER has now tuned in. Before Ian can respond Vee SLIDES into his booth and lays a SERIOUS KISS on him.

Tommy RECORDS the kiss, sick to his stomach.

VEE'S IPHONE:

VEE, nyc
DARE #1
1 Watcher

Vee kisses Ian.

TOMMY (O.S.)
*One mississippi. Two mississippi.
Three mississippi. Bingo.*

The CAMERA CUTS.

She did it. Tommy's relieved. But the kiss continues.

Ian is kissing her back! Sparks fly. Some kids APPLAUD. One girl seethes. CHLOE (18), a blonde waif with bee-stung lips.

When Vee finally pulls away, Ian manages a wan smile.

IAN
Thank you?

VEE
(stammering)
You're welcome? I mean thanks, er, bye.

Vee wriggles out of the booth, her knees still wobbly, with a giddy grin on her face. She beelines for Tommy's booth.

VEE (CONT'D)
I cannot believe I just did that.
Did you get it?

TOMMY
Get it? That kiss was a miniseries.

Vee takes her phone from Tommy. The PROGRESS BAR reads:
UPLOADING TO NERVE. PLEASE WAIT. Then...

VEE
(reading)
CONGRATULATIONS VEE!
YOU JUST WON \$100.
PLEASE ENTER YOUR BANK BRANCH
(MORE)

VEE (CONT'D)
**AND ROUTING NUMBER FOR US TO
 DEPOSIT YOUR WINNINGS.**

TOMMY
 Did that kiss make you stupid?

VEE
 What? I gave my boss a routing
 number for direct deposit. Actually
 it's my mom's account but you can
 only put money in. You can't take
 money out without a pin.

TOMMY
 (grabbing the menu)
 You owe me a burger.

VEE
 (feeling bad)
 Hey, thanks for being my wingman.
 Order the deluxe. I just got rich.

She pulls out her wallet and slides out her mother's ATM
 card. As she inputs the numbers, somebody in the diner
 starts to sing. Above the din. It's Ian, the guy she kissed.

IAN
 I'VE BEEN ROAMING AROUND,
 ALWAYS LOOKING DOWN AND ALL I SEE

He serenades Vee with Kings of Leon "Use Somebody" -- slow
 and sultry. He has an amazing voice and serious star power.

IAN (CONT'D)
 PAINTED FACES FILL THE
 PLACES I CAN'T REACH
 YOU KNOW THAT I COULD USE SOMEBODY
 YOU KNOW THAT I COULD USE SOMEBODY

Vee blushes hard, breathless and falling fast for Ian.

Some KID records Ian's impromptu performance. Girls swoon.
 Except the skinny Blonde Chloe, who seethes.

IAN (CONT'D)
 SOMEONE LIKE YOU AND
 ALL YOU KNOW AND HOW YOU SPEAK
 COUNTLESS LOVERS UNDERCOVER OF THE STREET
 YOU KNOW THAT I COULD USE SOMEBODY
 YOU KNOW THAT I COULD USE SOMEBODY
 SOMEONE LIKE YOU

Kids chime in to sing the background vocals "Oh -- oh --
 oh..." Vee turns crimson as Ian approaches their booth.

IAN (CONT'D)
You left me hanging back there.

VEE
Sorry, I was --

Tommy kicks her under the table reminding her she can't tell.

VEE (CONT'D)
I had a bad day and your lips kind
of got in the way.

Tommy forces an icy smile at Ian. Ian offers a handshake.

IAN
Ian Collier --

TOMMY
Tommy Mancuso. Do you always sing
in public places?

IAN
Nope. Never. I've also never been
kissed by a stranger. What's your
name, Stranger?

VEE
Vee. Like the letter.

TOMMY
It's short for Venus. You know, the
goddess of love?

Vee glowers at Tommy. The WAITRESS brings a burger and fries.

IAN
Vee, can I talk to you outside?

Vee gets up without a word to Tommy. She follows Ian --

EXT. ROSEWOOD DINER -- NIGHT

-- onto the sidewalk.

IAN
How'd you like my song?

VEE
You have a great voice. And I love
Kings of Leon.

IAN
Yeah, a little birdie told me that.

Ian pulls out his cell phone and shows her the NERVE SITE.
VEE'S THISISME PROFILE PHOTO is paired with a PHOTO OF IAN.

VEE
(disappointed)
You're playing NERVE. That's why
you were reading Lolita.

She feels sick. And embarrassed.

IAN
Yeah. Some kid came by and handed
it to me then took off on his bike.
(seeing her downcast face)
But I'm definitely gonna read it.

VEE
You should. It's a great book. Nice
to meet you.

She offers a handshake. He holds onto her hand.

IAN
Wait. Are you mad at me?

VEE
No. It makes sense. Guys don't
usually serenade me --

IAN
Maybe they should.

VEE
Look, this isn't -- me. I just
wanted to try something different.
I should go. My friend's waiting.

Vee's phone CHIMES with a NEW TEXT. She reads it.

NERVE:
VEE. THE WATCHERS THINK
YOU AND IAN MAKE A GREAT TEAM.
WE'D LIKE TO PAIR YOU UP
ON THE NEXT DARE.

IAN
I'm game if you are.

Vee blinks back at the hottest guy on the planet.

VEE
I can't. I'm covering a school
basketball game for the paper.

IAN

Really? Can't somebody else do it?
Like your friend in there?

She glances at Tommy through the window, wolfing his burger, sulking. Suddenly there's a KNOCK ON THE WINDOW. It's Chloe, the angry waif. She gives Ian the finger and walks away.

VEE

Your girlfriend?

IAN

Chloe? Definitely not. NERVE paired us up today and I guess she thought we would go to the Finals. But honestly, she's not my type.

He holds her gaze. A NEW TEXT CHIMES on Vee's phone.

NERVE:

**COME ON, VEE.
DITCH YOUR LITTLE BOYFRIEND
AND PLAY TO WIN...**

A PICTURE pops up on screen. It's the MACBOOK AIR.

VEE

I pinned this computer last week. I could never afford it.

IAN

That's how NERVE motivates you.
They make it like Christmas.

Vee absorbs this, a little put off.

IAN (CONT'D)

Look, I know you have your game and I don't want to rush you but we have ten minutes to get to the next dare. Are you in?

His eyes flicker with the promise of adventure.

INT. ROSEWOOD DINER -- NIGHT

Vee heads back inside the diner and slides into the booth with Tommy. When Chloe sees Vee come back in, she heads outside to talk to Ian.

Vee watches Tommy eat his burger, glum and surly. He's got ketchup smeared on his cheek. He looks like a sulky kid.

TOMMY

What'd he want?

VEE

He's playing NERVE, too.

TOMMY

(pleased by this)

Ohhhh. That's why he was singing.

VEE

(slightly annoyed)

The Watchers think we make a great couple. NERVE wants to pair us up for the next dare.

TOMMY

Too bad we have a game.

He munches a fry, holding her gaze. She hates him for this, forcing her hand. Her face burns.

VEE

The prize is a Macbook Air --

TOMMY

Jesus, you drank the Kool-Aid. You don't even know this guy. What if he's a serial killer?

VEE

The whole world will be watching. Or at least thousands of kids in the Tri-State area. If anything bad happens, I'll just come home.

TOMMY

Oh, and you think they'll let you just walk away? That's not how this works, Vee.

VEE

And if I don't play, I'll never know. I can just go back to my boring little life. Get good grades. Go to medical school --

TOMMY

Now you really sound like Sydney.

VEE

(simmering rage)

Forget it, okay? I can't explain it and you wouldn't understand anyway.

Her icy tone hurts. Vee digs for her wallet for the burger.

TOMMY

Don't worry about it --

VEE

I want to treat you --

TOMMY

My dad's an investment banker. I can buy my own burger. Go play your reindeer games.

VEE

I'm sorry I dragged you into this, Tommy. I will make it up to you.

Tommy watches Vee walk out and join Ian. Mr. Perfect.

EXT. ROSEWOOD DINER -- NIGHT

When Vee walks outside, Chloe and Ian stop arguing.

CHLOE

He's all yours, Bitch.

Chloe glowers at Vee and heads back inside the diner.

IAN

Sorry. She's very competitive. So what's the verdict?

VEE

(smiles bravely)
I'm in.

IAN

That's fantastic!

VEE

So what happens now?

IAN

I don't know. Check your phone.

Vee takes out her phone and sees a new message from NERVE.

NERVE:

ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?

She clicks PLAYER. Ian and Vee's phones both BUZZ/CHIME at the same moment with a NEW MESSAGE. They both read it.

NERVE: (CONT'D)
YOUR CHARIOT AWAITS.
SEE THE RED MUSTANG DOWN THE STREET?
IT'S YOURS FOR THE NIGHT.
THE KEYS ARE UNDER THE VISOR.

As they read the message:

VEE		IAN	
They're giving us a car?	Red Mustang...		*
			*

There's a SHINY RED MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE across the street.

IAN
(crossing the street)
Sweet! It's a convertible! Too bad
we can't keep it.

Vee lingers behind. Ian turns back.

IAN (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

VEE
My mom has a Red Mustang. But it's
falling apart. Is this a weird
coincidence or do you think they
know that?

IAN
They're pretty smart. And twisted.
Maybe they hacked into the DMV.

Off Vee, crept out --

INT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT

The SCOREBOARD ticks off the final seconds of the game:
:30...:29...:28... The bleachers packed and rowdy. There's an
explosion of CHEERS as the Falcons drive down the court.

Matt Ryan leads the pack like a teen gladiator, his lean body
slick with sweat. His teammate PASSES him the ball. Matt
fakes out his opponent and tosses a Hail Mary shot from the
baseline. SWISH! The crowd goes wild. The BUZZER sounds.
Falcons win. The Cheerleaders RUSH THE COURT, jumping up and
down. Without their captain -- Sydney.

EXT. LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL -- GYMNASIUM -- NIGHT

Sydney is on her cell phone pacing. Her tone vulnerable and
desperate as she leaves a message.

SYDNEY

Vee? I know you're pissed off, but I really need you right now. I just got the next dare from NERVE --

INT. MUSTANG (DRIVING) -- NIGHT

Top down, Ian drives. Vee sits shotgun. She eyes her cell phone: **SYDNEY MISSED CALL**

SYDNEY (V.O.)

-- and I'm freaking out. They know I'm afraid of heights because, like an idiot, I said so in their questionnaire.

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION -- NIGHT

Sydney's VOICE MESSAGE is being surveilled. It plays on a SMALL SPEAKER and automatically transcribes on a computer. We watch the words tick out as she says them. The spelling is sometimes off since it's phonetic.

SYDNEY (ON MESSAGE)

BUT I CAN'T GIVE UP NOW. CAN YOU MEET ME AT THE PARTY? IT'S AT KEVIN'S HOUSE: 5520 LANCASTER.

EXT. VINTAGE LOVE -- NIGHT

Ian pulls to the curb and cuts the engine.

VEE

Wait, why are we here?

IAN

This is the address they sent me.

Vee nods to a GATED CLOTHING STORE called "Vintage Love."

VEE

That's where I work.
(mounting dread)
What do we have to do?

Ian reads a TEXT off his phone, in answer.

IAN

**IAN & VEE, GO TO "VINTAGE LOVE."
GIVE EACH OTHER A NEW LOOK.
UPLOAD THE PICS TO NERVE.**

VEE

I can't do that. It's breaking and entering.

IAN

You don't have a key?

VEE

I do, but not to use whenever. My boss trusts me.

They're quiet a moment. Then --

IAN

If she trusts you, then -- why is it breaking and entering? We're just trying on clothes. We'll be in and out in five minutes. You win your laptop and you explain it all to her tomorrow.

Vee eyes the locked gate. Her mind and heart racing.

EXT. VINTAGE LOVE -- NIGHT

CLUNK. Vee lifts the PADLOCK and slides the GATE open with a SCREECH. She unlocks the front door and flips on the lights.

INT. VINTAGE LOVE -- NIGHT

Nervous, Vee pulls clothes from men's racks with impressive speed. Ian rifles through girls' clothes, unsure. He holds up a red leather bustier with fringe.

IAN

What do you think?

VEE

Yikes. Nothing too sexy.

IAN

But you're the goddess of love.

VEE

Yeah, obviously my mother was expecting someone else.

Ian laughs. Vee hands Ian a vintage Brooks Brothers shirt, red skinny tie, dark jeans.

IAN

Should I drop my pants right here?

VEE

Sorry, no, we have dressing rooms.

Ian changes in the stall. The sounds of a zipper and jeans being shoved off embarrasses Vee, on the other side.

VEE (CONT'D)

I can't believe I'm doing this.
It's so not me --

IAN

Which part?

VEE

All of it. I'm a serious nerd.
Straight As, teacher's pet --

IAN

So you're "breaking bad." You gotta
do that once in a while or you'll
really lose your mind.

VEE

You sound like my friend Sydney.
She would never believe this.

Ian opens the dressing room door, still fumbling with the top button of his jeans. The shirt is loose, as is the red tie draped around his neck. He's a mess, but an adorable mess.

IAN

I can't tie a tie to save my life.

Vee moves in to tie his tie, a little wistful.

VEE

I haven't done this in so long.
Since my dad lived with us. He
hated wearing ties. He said they
were only good for funerals and
weddings. He could never tie them
right, so I taught myself how. It
was our little bonding thing.

This close, Ian can see how pretty she is. And he's moved by her nostalgia for her dad. Vee lifts her eyes. They're so close, they could kiss. Which makes them both a little nervous. Vee backs away to take in Ian's look.

IAN

How do I look?

VEE
 (blushing hard)
 Good. I mean, I have great taste --

IAN
 (laughing)
 That makes one of us. Wait 'til you
 see what I picked out for you.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Tommy has just arrived home, breathless and upset. He drops his keys on his desk and flips on his computer. He goes directly to the "NERVE" web site and clicks on:

LOOK WHO'S PLAYING!

He scans the thumbnails. Some of those faces will appear in the final round for anyone paying attention. Toward the bottom, he finds **VEE** and clicks on her. TWO VIDEO CLIPS pop up. **DARE #1** in the diner and **DARE #2** --

VEE, nyc
DARE #2
5,226 WATCHERS

VEE (ON VIDEO)
 Hi, NERVE Watchers. This is Vee
 Smith.

IAN (O.C.)
 Don't say your last name.

VEE (ON VIDEO)
 Whoops. Anyway, we did the
 makeover dare. And this is what Ian
 picked out for me.

The CAMERA WIDENS to reveal Vee wearing a Chevron miniskirt, shredded Sex Pistols tank over a red bra, fishnet stockings and her faded Chucks. Hair loose, black eyeliner. A new girl.

VEE (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)
 I added the eyeliner --

The VIDEO STOPS ABRUPTLY. A message pops up:

**TO FOLLOW VEE AND IAN
 BECOME A WATCHER**

Tommy groans and clicks on **BECOME A WATCHER**. Another choice:

ONLINE WATCHER: \$19.99 FOR 24 HOURS

IN-PERSON WATCHER: \$49.99 FOR 24 HOURS

TOMMY

No. No way I'm giving you pricks my credit card.

Tommy closes the NERVE window and paces. He has no idea what to do with himself. His cell phone rings. He pounces for it hoping it's Vee. But the CALLER ID says **WES**.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Wes?

We hear a PARTY RAGING in the background.

WES (O.S.)

Where are you guys? We're having a Sydney sized crisis.

TOMMY

Because one a day isn't enough?

WES (O.S.)

Where's Vee? I need her now.

TOMMY

You're too late. The Taliban got her.

WES (O.S.)

Wait, what? I'm not kidding. Is she with you?

TOMMY

No. She went off with some rock star in a Red Mustang --

WES (O.S.)

Don't be a dick. Sydney's in trouble.

INTERCUT:

EXT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- POOL -- NIGHT

While the Falcon victory party rages inside the McMansion, a BUNCH OF KIDS have gathered outside by the pool. They're all looking up, including Liv and Wes on his cell phone.

TOMMY (O.S.)

Why? What's going on?

WES

For starters --

ON THE ROOF

Sydney stands shivering and staring at the pool. She's in her bra and underwear, hugging herself.

WES (CONT'D)

-- she's on the roof. She has to jump in the pool for her last dare.

TOMMY (O.S.)

I thought she was afraid of heights.

WES

Hence the crisis. Just get your ass over here.

LIV

You don't have to do this, Syd. It's just a game. It doesn't mean anything.

SYDNEY

It means everything. Are you recording?

Liv hits RECORD and holds up Sydney's iPhone.

LIV

Yes.

Sydney is barefoot, her TOES CLAWING the roof for balance. Step by step, she INCHES CLOSER to the edge of the roof.

The pool ripples below. The faces of the crowd looking up at her seem ghoulish. Especially Liv pointing the iPhone at her. Sydney starts to hyperventilate.

MATT

Come on, Syd, you can do it!
(opening his arms)
If you don't, I'll catch you.

Sydney clenches her jaw and squeezes her eyes shut. Her breathing is labored, making her dizzy.

POV SYDNEY'S IPHONE:

SYD, nyc

DARE #4

4,279 WATCHERS

Sydney sways. The crowd gasps. She barely catches herself.

SYDNEY
I can't do it.

We hear kids groan as the VIDEO CUTS OUT.

INT. MUSTANG (DRIVING) -- NIGHT

Ian drives while Vee checks her phone, positively giddy.

VEE
Oh my God. I have over six thousand
Watchers. How did that happen?!

IAN
(grinning)
You inherited all of mine. Now
that we're a team, people are
signing up to watch us together.

VEE
Wow. It kind of freaks me out that
that many people are watching us.

IAN
I know. But look at it this way:
when we get to 10,000 we're in the
Final Round.

VEE
Yeah, I don't think so. For me, not
you. My friend Sydney's playing and
she really wants to win, so I
wouldn't compete with her.

IAN
Is she a finalist?

Vee scans the **LOOK WHO'S PLAYING** section.

VEE
Let me check.

Vee finds SYDNEY'S FACE with a big red **X** through it.

VEE (CONT'D)
She was eliminated? She didn't even
call me.

Ian pulls to the curb and cuts the engine. Vee sees they're
parked on a desolate service road. The GEORGE WASHINGTON
BRIDGE looms above with its green service lights carving
ribbons in the night sky. She checks her phone for TEXT.

VEE (CONT'D)

(reading)

**THIS DARE IS ALL ABOUT TRUST. WHAT
WOULD IT TAKE FOR YOU TO TRUST IAN?**

(then)

How can I trust you? We just met.

IAN

What do you want to know? Ask me.

VEE

Where are you from?

IAN

Iowa. I grew up on a farm.

VEE

Really? That's cool. Why are you
in New York?

IAN

To play NERVE. And hopefully win.
It's not for me. It's for my
brother Adam. He's in trouble.
Wrong place, wrong time kind of
thing. The details aren't
important, but -- I need to win
this for him.

Vee's intrigued and moved by the story.

VEE

He's lucky to have you.

IAN

What about you? Why are you
playing?

VEE

I never intended to play past the
first dare. But any money I win
would go towards college. My
mother's working graveyard shifts
to pay for it and she's a zombie.

IAN

What about your dad?

VEE

Yeah, he can't help me. He can
barely help himself.

IAN

What does that mean?

VEE

(suddenly self-conscious)
I don't usually talk about him. He has a new life. New wife. Just had a baby. We sort of pretend he doesn't exist.

IAN

I get it. Families are complicated.

Ian takes her hand in his. Vee's heart leaps into her chest. She wants to be close to him.

VEE

(quiet, tentative)
You want to hear what happened?
(Ian nods)
My dad's an English professor. But he always wanted to be a writer. He had this one novel in his head for years and, finally during his sabbatical, he tried to write it. But he was really blocked. And he got so depressed.

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION -- NIGHT

BLACK & WHITE SURVEILLANCE VIDEO as the scene continues. There are hidden cameras tucked in corners of the Mustang.

VEE (ON VIDEO)

He started coming home stoned. My mom went crazy on him.

INT. MUSTANG (PARKED) - NIGHT

VEE

About how he was wasting his life and he'd never be a writer. So he switched to cocaine. But coke's expensive. And adjunct professors make no money. So he borrowed from my college fund. Little by little until it ran out. That was it for my mom. Game over.

IAN

I'm sorry, Vee.

VEE

The thing is -- now I want to be a writer. I just got an internship at the New York Times.

IAN

You did? That's incredible.

VEE

Yeah, thanks. But I have to turn it down. Since I'm under eighteen, my mom has to sign a permission slip. And she won't.

IAN

Why not?

VEE

She wants me to be a doctor. 'Cause it's stable and respectable --

IAN

(getting it)
-- and you won't turn into your dad.

She nods, grateful to be understood. He takes her hand.

IAN (CONT'D)

Look, it's not my business. But you're not your dad. And you must be good to get that internship. I bet a ton of people apply --

VEE

(dryly)
Over two hundred.

IAN

And they picked you. Your mom should be proud.

Vee's filled with mixed emotions. And desperate to be kissed. But they both hold back.

VEE

I'm not playing all the way to the end, but if I can help you right now, I will. What do we have to do?

IAN

(bracing himself)
Are you a good driver?

VEE

With my glasses on, yes. But Tommy has them so -- no. Not right now.

IAN

You won't need glasses for this.

VEE

What do you mean?

IAN

I have to blindfold you and be your navigator across the bridge. And I'm not allowed to touch the wheel.

VEE

They want me to drive blindfolded?

IAN

If we make it across, we both win a round trip ticket to anywhere in the world.

VEE

"If we make it...?" Ian, I can't. I'm way too smart to do something this stupid.

(off his look)

Will they disqualify you if we don't do this?

IAN

(a brave front)

It's okay. The Miami round is next month. I can try again.

They sit in awkward silence. Then Ian turns the ignition key.

IAN (CONT'D)

Where's your basketball game?

VEE

(checks her watch)

It's already over.

IAN

Then I'll take you home.

The sound of the engine means a return to the "Old Vee." She reaches for his hand and turns off the car. He waits.

VEE

I'd love to send my mom to Paris.

Ian cracks a smile. They're going for it.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE -- ON-RAMP -- NIGHT

The deafening sounds of the G.W. -- four lanes in both directions. Wall to wall cars. Now Vee drives the Mustang.

VEE
Is it recording?

Ian checks his PHONE which is ghetto-rigged to the dashboard.

IAN
Yes. You ready?

Vee nods, terrified. Ian wraps his red tie around her eyes and ties it behind her head.

IAN (CONT'D)
How's that?

VEE
Pitch black.

He sidles close to her, his mouth near her ear.

IAN
Okay, give it some gas.

POV VEE'S IPHONE:

VEE, nyc
DARE #3
6,218 WATCHERS

DUTCH ANGLE ON VEE AND PART OF IAN.

VEE
Am I gonna hit somebody?

IAN
No, you're fine.

She starts to VEER LEFT.

IAN (CONT'D)
To the right --

She CRANKS THE WHEEL RIGHT and they nearly hit an Escalade.

IAN (CONT'D)
Not so far!

HONKKK! The Escalade SWERVES and slams the horn.

VEE

Oh God, I can't do this --

IAN

Yes you can. Just stay calm and listen to my voice.

Ian lays his hand on Vee's thigh. She flinches.

IAN (CONT'D)

If I press down, that means give it some gas. If I let up, you do the same, okay?

VEE

'Kay.

The traffic picks up. Ian SQUEEZES HER THIGH gently and Vee PRESSES THE GAS -- just right this time.

IAN

That's it. Perfect.

VEE

Should I slow down now?

IAN

No. I'll let you know.

VEE

Now?

IAN

Vee, relax. I've got you.

Ian glances at the walkway alongside the bridge and notices THREE KIDS with iPhones videotaping their stunt. They whoop and cheer as Vee drives by.

WATCHER

Go, Vee!

WATCHER #2

We love you guys!

IAN

Forget them.

Vee nods. He's the puppet master and she's at his mercy.

IAN (CONT'D)
(squeezing her)
A little faster.

She holds her breath and depresses the gas pedal.

IAN (CONT'D)
Right there.

They cross the bridge in moving traffic, the wind blowing against her face and through her hair. It's exhilarating.

VEE
Oh God, where's the end? It seems
like we should be there --

IAN
You're almost there.

A MINIVAN full of FRAT BOYS changes lanes to catch up with them. Shotgun is TY (20, beefy, crass red-head). He rolls down his window and heckles Vee.

TY
What is this? The bondage school of
driving?!

IAN
Ignore them. Listen to me.

TY
Are you into whips and chains?

Vee stays on task, ignoring them.

TY (CONT'D)
Hello! I'm talking to you!

The Van SWERVES across the dividing line, almost hitting Vee.

IAN
(hiking up)
Leave her alone!

The frat boys cut up laughing.

IN THE MINIVAN

Ty's frat brother ROGER spots a --

POLICE CAR in the FAR RIGHT LANE, gaining on the Mustang.

ROGER
Yo, Ty! Cops!

Ty leans out the window and sees the police car.

TY
Where's the bullhorn?

The frat boys search the back. They find a bullhorn and pass it up to Ty. He leans out.

TY (CONT'D)
(into the horn)
NYPD! There's a girl driving
blindfolded! Right here!

IN THE MUSTANG

VEE
The police?!

Ian cranes around and sees the POLICE CAR.

IAN
Don't panic.

VEE
What do I do?!

IAN
You said you'd trust me.
(glancing back)
Just give it a little gas.

She does. But the COP is getting closer.

IN THE MINIVAN

Ty lurches across the driver and pumps the horn to get the cop car's attention. He leans out the window again.

TY
(into the bullhorn)
Right here! She's a major hazard!

The COP flips on his LIGHTS and SIREN and picks up speed.

IN THE MUSTANG

VEE
I can't get arrested!

IAN
You won't. Trust me. Slow down.

Traffic slows ahead of them. The Cop pulls into the lane behind the Mustang, lights flashing in the rearview mirror.

VEE
Should I pull over?!

IAN
You can't. It's a bridge.

The Cop MOVES OVER one more lane, behind the Minivan. Ian instantly realizes that's his target. He grins.

IAN (CONT'D)
We're good, Vee, you can do this.
Slowly give it some gas.

VEE
I want to stop.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- OFFICE -- NIGHT

THE IPHONE VIDEO CLIP PLAYS on the NERVE web site.

VEE, nyc
DARE #3
7,823 WATCHERS

VEE
I can't get arrested!

IAN
You won't. Trust me. Slow down.

VEE
Should I pull over?!

IAN
You can't. It's a bridge.

THE VIDEO IMAGE FREEZES. There's a collective groan from the PARTY KIDS gathered around the computer screen watching. Including Liv, Wes and Tommy up front. We're at the Falcons game after party in a big Riverdale McMansion. We hear the party raging below. A MESSAGE POPS UP on the NERVE web site.

**DO YOU THINK VEE AND IAN
MAKE IT ACROSS THE BRIDGE?
PLACE YOUR \$10 BET!**

YES NO

The CROWD surges with opinions: "Say Yes!" "No, say No!"

TOMMY

Shut up!

LIV

Wes, place the bet so we can see what happened!

WES

(reaching)

What should I bet?

LIV

Yes!

TOMMY

Yes!

*
*

Wes clicks **YES** and the CLIP plays down.

Ian glances back at the cop car and grins.

IAN

*We're good, Vee, you can do this.
Okay, slowly give it some gas.*

VEE

I want to stop.

ANGLE ON LIV AND TOMMY

LIV

Oh God, I can't watch this.

TOMMY

Please don't crash.

The crowd chants: "Vee! Vee! Vee!"

IAN

*Ten more yards and your mom's going
to Paris.*

VEE

No, I don't care, I don't care --

Vee finishes crossing the bridge. Ian rips off her blindfold.

IAN

You did it!

VEE

I did?

The kids explode with cheers and applause. Tommy is horrified. Liv grabs hold of Wes, finally able to breathe.

LIV
Oh, thank you God.

The VIDEO CLIP FREEZES on Vee's grinning face and a MESSAGE pops up on the screen:

**CONGRATULATIONS, WES!
YOU JUST WON YOUR BET.
YOU HAVE \$80 IN YOUR NERVE BANK.**

As kids leave to rejoin the party, Sydney wanders in, now clothed and quite drunk.

SYDNEY
What're you watching?

LIV
I can't believe she did that!

SYDNEY
Who did what?

WES
Vee. She's playing NERVE.

LIV
With the hottest guy on the planet.
They have seven thousand Watchers.

SYDNEY
Wait, my Vee?!

TOMMY
(nasty, to Sydney)
And she has you to thank.

SYDNEY
Me? Why is this my fault?

TOMMY
She signed up for NERVE to prove
you wrong.

SYDNEY
That's ridiculous --

TOMMY
Is it? You're her best friend and
you shredded her. Anything that
happens to her tonight is on you.

Tommy walks away. Sydney struggles to make sense of all this.

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Nancy fills out a patient chart at the Nurse's Station.

 CHLOE (O.S.)
Nurse?

 NANCY
I'll be right with you.

 CHLOE (O.S.)
I'm a friend of Vee's.

Nancy lifts her eyes to find --

CHLOE -- the blonde waif from the diner -- blood gushing down her face from a cut across her forehead. Nancy springs into action toward her.

 NANCY
Oh my God. What happened?

 CHLOE
 (whimpering)
We had an accident --

 NANCY
 (panicking)
Where's Vee?

 CHLOE
I don't know! We were on a bridge!

 NANCY
Which bridge?!

 CHLOE
I think it was the George
Washington --

 NANCY
Is she okay?

 CHLOE
 (hysterical)
I don't know!

Nancy panics and waves over her fellow nurse BRENDA (25).

 NANCY
Brenda! Take this girl down to
triage and make sure they see her
right away.

BRENDA

Of course. Follow me, Sweetheart.

Chloe goes with Brenda. As she passes the WAITING ROOM, she flashes a wolf-like grin at --

SAM (20s, East Indian) -- her new partner since Ian ditched her. He points his iPhone at Nancy with maximum stealth.

CHLOE'S IPHONE VIDEO:

CHLOE, nyc
DARE #4
5,926 WATCHERS

Nancy is behind the counter on the phone, trying to keep it together and professional in tone.

NANCY

Hello? Yes, it's an emergency. My daughter's been in an accident. I think she's on the G.W. Bridge. No, I'm not with her. How do I know?! A friend of hers just told me. I don't know who she is!

EXT. NEW JERSEY STREET -- NIGHT

Vee and Ian are parked on a side street, eating Gyro sandwiches, still buzzing from the bridge.

VEE

God, I've never been so hungry --

IAN

That's pure adrenalin. It's a drug. You look like a different girl.

VEE

What do you mean?

Ian pulls down her visor and slides open her mirror. She peers into her own reflection. Bright eyes, hair loose, cheeks flushed. The effect is dizzying. Vee's phone rings. She checks the CALLER ID: **MOM.**

VEE (CONT'D)

(showing him)

Did I mention I'm grounded?

IAN

Don't answer it.

She makes a face; she can't not answer and braces herself.

VEE

Hi Mom.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

NANCY

Vee? Where are you?!

VEE

(struggling to lie)

I'm home. Doing the laundry.

NANCY

Why didn't you answer me?!

Vee glances at Ian, who understands to stay quiet.

VEE

I was down in the basement doing
the laundry.

NANCY

For an hour?!

VEE

(improvising)

It was really busy tonight. So I
read and waited for a dryer.

She winces and looks at Ian, who nods: "You're doing fine."

NANCY

Oh, thank God. Some girl said you
were in an accident on the G.W. --

VEE

(on edge)

What do you mean? What girl?

NANCY

Some friend of yours, I've never
met her before. She came in
bleeding and she said you were in
an accident.

VEE

What did she look like?

NANCY

I don't know, Honey. Some skinny
Blonde covered in blood.

Vee thinks hard, realizing it was a NERVE dare. Maybe Chloe.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I can't wait for this day to be
over. I know it sounds crazy, but
check the stove and double lock the
door. Mercury's in retrograde and I
can't handle any more bad news.

VEE

Sure, Mom. Don't worry about me.

NANCY

That's what mothers do. You'll see.
I love you to the stars and back.

VEE

Me too. See you in the morning.
(hangs up, shaken)
I've never lied to my mom before.

IAN

You okay?

She smiles bravely and nods. Her phone CHIMES with a text.

IAN (CONT'D)

It's probably our next dare.

Vee picks up her phone and reads the TEXT.

VEE

**GO TO THE FALCONS PARTY
AND SLAP SYDNEY
ACROSS THE FACE.
PRIZE: \$5,000**

IAN

Who's Sydney?

VEE

My best friend. The one who was
disqualified.
(realizes)
How does NERVE know about the
party? Are they reading my texts?

IAN

Probably. Apparently it's really
easy to hack someone's phone.

VEE

That's such a violation of privacy.
It has to be illegal.

IAN

I'm sure it is. But if no one
knows who they are, they can't
prosecute.

Ian takes her phone and reads the TEXT.

VEE

There's no way I'm slapping my best
friend.

IAN

The prize is five grand. Can I slap
her?

VEE

(laughing)

No! And, believe me, when you meet
her you won't want to. Without
fail, every guy I ever liked falls
for Sydney.

IAN

I wouldn't.

VEE

Yes you would.

IAN

No I wouldn't. I'm into you. Don't
you get that?

Ian stares at Vee. She blushes, scared to believe him. She
turns her eyes to him, trying to be brave. Ian leans across
the car and kisses her. It's tender. Real. And sexy. When
they finally pull away --

VEE

Please tell me that wasn't a dare.

IAN

It wasn't a dare. It was all me.

Vee studies his gorgeous face, up close. It takes her breath
away. She laughs nervously.

VEE

Sydney would die if she saw us
together.

IAN

Yeah? Let's go to the party and find out. I promise, you don't have to slap her.

Vee laughs. She can't help but like the idea.

INT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Thumping music, beer, dancing, wild laughter. It's a crush of young hormonal bodies. Tight skimpy clothes, no room to move.

Vee and Ian cross the threshold of the front door. She's nervous, overwhelmed. Ian takes her hand. As they make their way through the thick, rowdy crowd, Dana spots them:

DANA

It's Vee! They're here!

Kids look around, see Vee and start to applaud. Pretty soon the whole room is applauding. Vee floats on air.

IAN

Should we give them a show?

Ian grabs Vee and kisses her for the crowd. Making her look like a goddess. Liv races over.

LIV

Vee! We saw you on the bridge!
(to Ian, flirting)
I'm Liv, by the way.

IAN

Nice to meet you, Liv.

VEE

Where's Sydney?

LIV

Upstairs. Vee, wait, she's a mess. She got disqualified --

VEE

I know. Can you keep Ian company?

LIV

Are you kidding?

VEE

(to Ian)
I'll be down in a minute.

Vee heads upstairs. Liv pulls Ian toward the dance floor. He's a good sport about it, amused by all of this.

INT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- SECOND FLOOR -- NIGHT

Vee presses through the wall-to-wall crowd. She finds Wes.

WES

Vee! I love the Chevron mini. You could be on the cover of NYLON.

VEE

Yeah, right. Have you seen Sydney?

WES

She was on line for the bathroom.

He points. Vee follows in that direction, finding the line outside the bathroom. She asks the GIRL WAITING --

VEE

Is Sydney in there?

GIRL

I don't know, but we've been out here forever.

Vee knocks on the door.

VEE

Sydney?

SYDNEY (O.S.)

We're coming.

The door whips open. Sydney's caught in the act. Just behind her is Matt Ryan, Vee's crush, tugging himself together post messing around. Vee feels burned, betrayed by Sydney.

VEE

(fighting tears)
Sorry to bother you.

Vee walks away. Sydney trails after her --

SYDNEY

Come on, you never spoke to him!

DOWN THE STAIRS

VEE

Is that your excuse? 'Cause it's always something. You never take any responsibility for anything.

Liv beelines for them at the base of the stairs.

LIV

Guys? Stop. You're best friends.

SYDNEY

No, this is good. She's finally speaking up. Come on, Vee. The truth will set you free.

Ian CUTS OUT THE STEREO. The kids on the dance floor groan and gradually tune in to the fight.

VEE

Stop patronizing me, Sydney.

SYDNEY

I'm trying to help you. You're the most repressed person I know.

Ian pulls out his iPhone and starts RECORDING the fight.

VEE

That's exactly why you keep me around.

SYDNEY

What does that mean?

Tommy is ON THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING. Seeing the fight, he heads downstairs and weaves through the crowd toward them.

VEE

It means you need to be the star. Only you. Ever since you were six years old it's been the Sydney show and we're all playing bit parts.

SYDNEY

(hissing back)
Yes, and it gave you a purpose in life. I made all the decisions so you never had to.

VEE

You want me to make a decision?

TOMMY
(closing in)
Vee, stop --

VEE
How 'bout this? I'm done being your
sidekick. I'm done getting roped
into your stupid escapades.

SYDNEY
Yeah, it looks like you found your
own stupid escapades. Congrats.
(re: Ian)
Now you're someone else's sidekick.

TOMMY
C'mon, Syd. You're drunk.

SYDNEY
And you're pathetic. Can't you see
she traded up?

Tommy's humiliated. Publicly.

VEE
Sydney, why are you such a bitch?

The B word! The crowd ripples with anticipation.

SYDNEY
Playing NERVE isn't gonna turn you
into someone else, Vee. You were
born to follow orders. You're a
good little girl and someday you'll
be a good little doctor, thanks to
your mother Nancy the Nazi --

WHACK! Vee SLAPS SYDNEY ACROSS THE FACE. Sydney gasps.

Ian cracks a smile. She just won the dare.

FALCON
Catfight!

LIV
No --

CROWD
(chanting)
Cat-fight! Cat-fight! Cat-fight!

SYDNEY
You know I'm right!

Vee lunges for her. Liv and Tommy dive in to haul her back.

VEE

At least my mother loves me. Yours is always flying off to Europe. You know why? 'Cause she finally gave up trying to fix you. And she's sick of being ashamed of her own daughter.

Sydney glances around, pale and mortified. The crowd is hushed and riveted. Vee knows she crossed a line.

VEE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I said that --

SYDNEY

No you're not. You've been wanting to say that for years.

Ian grabs Vee's hand and pulls her toward the door.

IAN

Come on, let's go.

SYDNEY

(to Vee, nasty)

You really think a guy that hot would go for you? It's a game. It's probably just another dare.

VEE

(turning back)

You're so jealous you can't see straight. Too bad you choked. It would have been fun to kick your ass in the final round.

Vee and Ian leave the party together. Sydney's speechless.

EXT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- NIGHT

As Ian and Vee head toward the car, Vee's in shock.

IAN

Who knew you were such a badass.

VEE

I've never hit anyone before.

IAN

She was asking for it. I'll send you the clip --

TOMMY (O.S.)

Vee!

Tommy races out to catch up with them. Ian feels for this poor lovesick kid.

IAN

(to Vee)

I'll wait in the car.

Tommy catches up to Vee as Ian heads for the parked Mustang.

TOMMY

(pent up)

He seems like a nice guy.

VEE

He is.

TOMMY

I said "seems." He's playing a game, Vee. He's playing you. Don't you get it? How do you know this isn't one giant dare for him?

Vee can't afford to entertain that question. Not now.

VEE

(walking away)

I gotta go, Tommy --

TOMMY

No! After everything I've done for you, I get five minutes of your time.

Vee stops and turns back, without closing the gap between them. She checks her watch.

VEE

Go ahead.

Tommy's disgusted by the gesture.

TOMMY

You're just as bad as Sydney. Actually, you're worse. Sydney can't help herself. But you can and you destroyed her in there --

VEE

Yeah, payback's a bitch. Are we done?

TOMMY

Just one more thing. I've liked you ever since we sat next to each other on the bus down to DC in sixth grade. You pretend you don't know that, and I'm too chickenshit to speak up so we just coast in this code of silence. But screw it. You've inspired me. Being your friend is torture. I'm in love with you.

Ian leans out the Mustang window.

IAN

Vee? We gotta go.

TOMMY

I just want to point out that it would be inhumane for you to leave now without saying anything. Like Darfur, inhumane.

Even this is what she loves about Tommy. She musters her courage to tell him the truth. Quiet and compassionate.

VEE

You're right. I did know. And I used you, for rides and -- lots of things. And I'm sorry.

Tommy can feel the heartbreak descending like an anvil.

VEE (CONT'D)

But I'm not -- into you. I wish -- I want to be. 'Cause I adore you... You're smart and funny and the sweetest guy in the world --

TOMMY

Stop. Or I might kill myself.

VEE

Let me go, Tommy. There's some amazing girl out there and you need to make room for her.

Follow Vee to THE MUSTANG as she climbs in.

IAN

You okay?

VEE

No. Let's drive.

Ian revs the car, giving her space. Having cut off her two best friends, Vee feels rudderless, alone.

INT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Angry tears streak down Sydney's face. She dials on her cell.

SYDNEY
Montefiore Hospital.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NURSE'S STATION -- NIGHT

The Receptionist holds the receiver out to Nancy, who abandons a vitals cart in the hallway.

NANCY
Hello?

SYDNEY
Nancy? It's Sydney St. James. I know Vee's going to think I'm calling you out of some sense of revenge -- but it's not that. I'm concerned about her. Deeply concerned.

By now, Nancy is riddled with anxiety.

NANCY
Sydney? I'm on my eighth hour of a twelve hour shift. Let's cut the preamble and tell me what's going on.

SYDNEY
Vee's playing NERVE.

TIME CUT:

Nancy sits at the desktop computer at the Nurse's Station on the NERVE WEB SITE. Under the **NYC FINAL ROUND COUNTDOWN** -- which now read **3:23:51**, they've ranked the **TOP TEN PLAYERS**. Including **Vee** and **Ian**. Nancy clicks on **Vee** and her dares pop up across the screen. Nancy picks **DARE #3** -- the G.W. bridge.

VEE'S IPHONE VIDEO:

VEE, nyc
DARE #3
9,689 WATCHERS

Vee drives blindfolded in a panic as the siren gets louder.

VEE
I can't get arrested!

IAN
You won't. Trust me.

Nancy cups her mouth, shattered by what she sees.

IAN (CONT'D)
Slow down. Stop.

The Cop pulls into the lane behind the Mustang, their lights flashing in the rearview mirror.

VEE
Should I pull over?!

IAN
You can't. It's a bridge.

The VIDEO STOPS ABRUPTLY. A message pops up:

**TO FOLLOW VEE AND IAN
BECOME A WATCHER**

Nancy turns to a fellow nurse Brenda, seated behind her.

NANCY
Hey, can you cover me for a minute?
I think I'm gonna throw up.

Worried, Brenda watches Nancy move off down the hall.

INT. SUBWAY (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Ian and Vee ride the NUMBER ONE LOCAL train above ground. Vee looks around the car.

A bunch of TEENAGED BOYS at the other end of the car grin at Vee. A WHITE GUY WITH DREADLOCKS, grooving to his iPod, winks at her. Is he a Watcher? Everybody starts to look strange. SUPERIMPOSE the next dare on screen:

**NERVE:
SYDNEY TOLD US YOU LIKE POLE DANCING.
DEMONSTRATE YOUR SKILLS BETWEEN STOPS.
NO SHIRT, BRA ONLY.
PRIZE: KEEP THE MUSTANG**

VEE
(horrified to realize)
Sydney and I took a pole dancing
class. One class.

IAN
How does NERVE know that? Did you
post it online?

VEE
No.
(realizing)
There's only one way they could
know. Sydney told them. She thinks
I'll chicken out and get
disqualified.

IAN
You really think she'd do that?

Vee looks around the car at the varied patchwork of faces. It's a microcosm of the New York melting pot. Every age, race, class -- from civil servants to Wall Street yuppies. But to Vee, they're all strangers and terrifying in this context. The train screeches into the 168th Street Station.

IAN (CONT'D)
Vee? What are you thinking?

Vee's terror hardens into rage. That her best friend would set her up like this. It fuels her.

VEE
Screw Sydney. I'm gonna win that
Mustang for my mom.
(laughing nervously)
I don't know how I'll explain it...

Seeing her terror, Ian takes her face in his hands.

IAN
Listen to me. Keep your eyes on me
the whole time and forget everyone
else. We'll bolt at the next stop.

Vee nods. A tear brimming her lid. He thumbs it away.

IAN (CONT'D)
You're the coolest, bravest girl in
the world right now. When this is
all over, we're gonna go on a real
date. Okay?

Vee nods. People get on and off the train. Vee watches them, her heart pounding in her chest. DING-DONG. The doors close. This is it. As the train wheels grind into motion, Ian switches his phone to RECORD and trains it on Vee with a nod. Vee squeezes her eyes shut, willing herself. She tugs her T-shirt over her head and hands it to Ian.

DREADLOCKS

(thrilled)

Oh shit. What is this?

Vee grabs hold of the pole and spins around it, mortified.

Two TEENAGED BOYS at the end of the car film Vee on iPhones. A beefy SECURITY GUARD pipes up.

SECURITY GUARD

Yo, put your clothes on. There's kids up in here!

A HISPANIC MOTHER in a domestics uniform scowls at Vee and turns her FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL away, scolding her quietly in Spanish when she glances back.

Vee fights tears. She holds Ian's gaze. He nods to Vee, encouraging her, his heart breaking for her.

The train car darkens as they head into a TUNNEL. The LIGHTS STROBE through the windows.

On IAN'S PHONE, a TEXT MESSAGE overrides the video.

NERVE:

IAN, BEFORE YOU GET TO THE NEXT STOP, PULL THE EMERGENCY BRAKE.

Ian's jaw slackens. His heart races. He gets a NEW TEXT.

NERVE: (CONT'D)

DO IT NOW OR YOU'RE DISQUALIFIED.

Ian glances around for the EMERGENCY BRAKE. He turns the iPhone on himself, then he grabs the RED HANDLE and PULLS.

Vee STUMBLES and LURCHES, grabbing the pole for balance.

Ian drops the PHONE which skids across the subway floor --

POV VEE'S IPHONE:

pointed up from the floor. A blur of movement and panic as the train grinds to a halt. People swarm like bees in a hive.

WOMAN (O.S.)

What happened?!

MAN (O.S.)

He pulled the emergency brake!

INT. ONE TRAIN -- TUNNEL -- NIGHT

The train is stuck in a tunnel between stops. In the panic that follows, Vee instantly realizes Ian pulled the brake on a dare. The crowd goes crazy, everyone talking at once.

DREADLOCKS

What is this bullshit!?

BUSINESSMAN

(to Ian)
You know that's illegal,
right? What you did --

HISPANIC MOTHER

(in Spanish)
*I have to go home! My
daughter's sick.*

SECURITY GUARD

Hey, Punk! I saw you do that!

Ian scrambles through the angry crowd to give Vee her shirt.

VEE

(yanking it on)
You asshole --

IAN

I dropped your phone --

Ian searches the floor. He spots her phone under a bank of seats. Seeing this, the Security Guard snatches it. At 6-foot-5, he towers over Ian.

SECURITY GUARD

Is this what you want?
(playing keep away)
I just worked a fourteen hour shift
and all I want to do is get home to
see my kids before they go to bed.
You owe me and all these folks an
explanation.

Ian's veneer starts to crack under the punishing gaze of the crowd. Vee looks terrified, her skin pale and damp.

IAN

I'm sorry. It was a joke.

VEE

We're playing a game of dares --

SECURITY GUARD

A game?!

He draws his NIGHTSTICK from his belt, raising it overhead.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

You think this is a toy?!

Ian steps in front of Vee.

IAN

She didn't do anything. I did. You can deal with me.

SECURITY GUARD

Oh, can I, tough guy? It would be my pleasure --

BUSINESSMAN

Listen, the police are coming --

SECURITY GUARD

-- but they're not here yet. So let's take a vote. How many of you want me to waste this punk?

At least a DOZEN PEOPLE APPLAUD. The Security Guard moves to strike Ian with the stick but stops short with a wicked grin. He returns the stick to its holster.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Lucky for you, it's illegal for me to use this when I'm off-duty. You want your phone back?

The Guard holds it up and then BACKHANDS Ian across the face.

VEE

Ian!

Ian reels and turns back to the Guard, refusing to show fear.

CLICK. Ian pulls a SWITCH BLADE from his back pocket and trains it on the Guard. Vee gasps. The car goes silent.

IAN

Give me the cell phone.

The guard hands it over. Ian pockets it and takes Vee's hand. She's reluctant, but he tightens his grip and pulls her, using his knife to clear a path.

IAN (CONT'D)

Excuse us.

The crowd parts like the Red Sea. Ian leads Vee to the far end of the car and opens the door between cars.

VEE
Are you crazy?

IAN
Come on.

Ian hurdles over the subway chain --

ONTO THE TRACK

-- and extends his hand to Vee.

IAN
Cops are coming. We can't be here.
(off her hesitation)
You can hate me later, once we're
out of here.

With no choice, Vee takes his hand and swings her leg over the chain. He lifts her down. She glances around the dungeon of the New York underground. A world of exposed industrial wires, refuse and shadows. It's truly hellish.

NANCY (PRE-LAP)
Venus? This is your mother calling.

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NURSE'S STATION -- NIGHT

Nerves frayed, Nancy leaves a message on Vee's cell phone.

NANCY
I know about NERVE and you're in
big trouble. Obviously. Call me
back in the next 15 minutes or I'm
calling the police. And I mean it.

EXT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Sydney struggles to get her car key in the door of her BMW. She's either too drunk or too upset to make it happen.

The front door of the house opens. It's Tommy and Wes.

WES
Syd! Come inside.

SYDNEY
(slurred)
No. I'm going home.

Wes and Tommy catch up to her.

TOMMY
You're too drunk to drive.

SYDNEY
Who cares. Leave me alone.

WES
C'mon Sydney --

Wes reaches for her key. She wields it like a knife.

SYDNEY
I'm not going back in there. No
matter what you do.

TOMMY
I'll drive her.

WES
How will you get back here?

TOMMY
I'll take a cab.

Tommy takes her keys out of her hand. He opens the door.
Sydney doesn't argue. Wes heads back to the house yelling,

WES
Who says chivalry's dead?

TUNNELS -- NIGHT

Ian and Vee walk on the subway tracks. Vee is icy, walking
five paces ahead of Ian. He feels awful.

IAN
That was my last dare --

VEE
Congrats. You're going to the Final
Round

IAN
Vee, I'm sorry. I really am.

VEE

Why should you be? Tommy's right.
You're playing a game. And I'm
collateral damage.

Vee's phone CHIMES. She reads the text and laughs bitterly.

VEE (CONT'D)

I didn't win the Mustang.

IAN

Why not?

VEE

I broke rule number two. I told
people on the train we were playing
a game. And somebody filmed it.

IAN

So you're out?

VEE

Nope. They're gonna give me another
chance.

Vee keeps walking. Ian trails after.

IAN

That's great. What's the dare?

VEE

I don't care. I'm going home.

IAN

Because of me?

VEE

Not because of you. Because of me.
I had my fun. Some not-so-fun.

IAN

I thought you wanted to win.

VEE

Nope. I'm done.

Unseen by Vee, Ian is visibly upset by her announcement.
Maybe because he likes her. Or possibly something darker.

INT. SYDNEY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Tommy unlocks the front door. It's pitch dark. He searches
for a light. Sydney laughs at him and turns it on.

The house is luxe in every way. Marble floors, Persian rugs, Chinese vases. But it has a cold, un-lived-in feeling. Sydney steps out of her heels and walks barefoot to the kitchen.

TOMMY

Where's your dad?

Tommy waits by the door, ready to leave.

SYDNEY (O.S.)

Probably with his mistress. He rented her a studio apartment. He thinks we don't know but my mom and I joke about it. You hungry?

Tommy realizes it's an invitation. He follows Sydney --

INTO THE KITCHEN

She opens the refrigerator.

TOMMY

I like your house.

SYDNEY

Really?

TOMMY

No. Just making small talk. Can I ask you something?
(off her look)
How come you hate me so much?

She grabs a package of sliced turkey and shuts the fridge.

SYDNEY

I don't hate you. I feel bad for you. You're in love with Vee and she doesn't love you back.

She peels off slices and eats them by hand. Tommy's quiet.

TOMMY

Do you think I don't know that?

SYDNEY

Then you should go to a shrink and figure out why you set yourself up for failure.

TOMMY

Yeah? Have you figured it out yet?

Sydney glowers at him, wounded.

SYDNEY

How come you hate me?

TOMMY

I don't hate you.

SYDNEY

You don't love me either.

TOMMY

You've got enough guys killing themselves to be with you. I don't think you need one more.

SYDNEY

They just want sex.

TOMMY

So? What do you want?

She considers it and her eyes well up.

SYDNEY

It'd be nice to go to the movies with someone once in a while. And not end up on my back.

Tommy takes this in, her sadness. He sees her fully and she knows it. For an instant, they feel the romantic potential.

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NURSE'S STATION -- NIGHT

Nancy is on the phone with the police department, getting nowhere. Brenda mans the hospital calls in the background.

NANCY

No, she's not missing. She's playing a game. It's called Nerve. NERVE. They make kids do crazy things for prizes -- Then what good are you?

(then)

No, I'm not being rude, I need help. And you're the police --

Brenda picks up a call behind her and puts them on hold.

BRENDA

Nancy?

(holding out the phone)

It's Citibank.

NANCY
Citibank? What do they want?

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS -- CITIBANK ATM -- NIGHT

Vee slides her BANK CARD into a CITIBANK ATM machine and punches in her code. Ian hovers a respectable distance away.

IAN
Let me drive you home.

VEE
No, thanks. I'll take a cab.

Vee presses the **\$40** button on the screen. A message appears:

**I'M SORRY. THERE ARE
NOT ENOUGH FUNDS TO
COMPLETE THIS TRANSACTION.**

VEE (CONT'D)
Wait, what do you mean?

Vee presses the **\$20** button on the ATM. Gets the same message.

VEE (CONT'D)
Oh God. The money...

IAN
I'll loan you some.

VEE
You don't understand. There's
twenty-thousand dollars in this
account.

In a panic, she hits the button that reads: **GET BALANCE**

CURRENT BALANCE: \$18.75

VEE (CONT'D)
(hyperventilating)
All my college money... I gave them
my account number.

IAN
Maybe it's a mistake.

VEE
It's not a mistake. They took it.

IAN
Do you guys have fraud protection?

VEE

I don't even know what that is.
God, my mom... She can't handle
this. She'll have a heart attack.

Vee's CELL PHONE RINGS. The Caller ID says **MOM**.

VEE (CONT'D)

She knows. My mom knows.

IAN

Don't answer it.

Vee considers it and hits IGNORE. Her voice breaking.

VEE

She's so tired. And she does it all
for me. What am I gonna do?

IAN

I don't know. I'm sorry. Is there
some way I can help you?

VEE

(shattered)
Take me home.

Off Ian, saddened but resigned --

INT. ONE TRAIN (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Ian and Vee ride the subway seated side by side in silence.
Vee is pale, her eyes vacant. Ian reaches for her hand.

EXT. 246TH STREET - BRONX, NY -- NIGHT

Vee and Ian climb into the Mustang. Her phone CHIMES.

NERVE:

VEE, ARE YOU MISSING SOMETHING?

VEE

They're toying with me.

Two options pop up: **YES** and **NO**. She clicks **YES**.

NERVE:

**WE BELIEVE IN SECOND CHANCES.
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER DARE?
THE PRIZE IS \$20,000.**

Two options pop up: **YES** and **NO**.

VEE

They're making me play, to get the money back.

IAN

You're kidding.

She clicks YES.

VEE

Okay, Assholes. What do I have to do?

NERVE:

**GO TO LORILLARD PLACE IN BELMONT.
TEXT: LP2M5 TO 917-555-6182.
WAIT FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.**

VEE

What's LP2M5? Some kind of code?

IAN

LP. Lorillard Place. So what's 2M?

Off Vee, nervous --

INT. SYDNEY'S HOUSE -- SYDNEY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sydney and Tommy fool around on her bed. It's hot and sweaty. She reaches for the fly of his jeans.

TOMMY

Wait. I was supposed to be the guy you went to the movies with --

SYDNEY

It's okay. I want to.

She goes for it again. Pained, Tommy stops her.

TOMMY

No.

Sydney's swallowed up in shame and pulls away, angry.

SYDNEY

That's great. You get to tell everyone that I threw myself at you and you turned me down.

TOMMY

Come on, Syd. You know me. You know I'd never do that.

SYDNEY

Is it Vee?

TOMMY

No. It's not Vee.

SYDNEY

Then what's the problem?

TOMMY

I want to. Believe me. But I'm not gonna be another guy who takes advantage of you when you're drunk and insecure. Tomorrow, in the light of day, you'll thank me.

SYDNEY

You're wrong. And I'm not drunk anymore. But I get it. You're a nice guy. And I'm damaged goods.

TOMMY

No you're not, Sydney. That's a story you tell yourself and then you act like it's true. But that's not who you are. Not really.

SYDNEY

How would you know?

TOMMY

Because we've been friends since preschool. Then when I started liking Vee, you hated me.

SYDNEY

(admits)

I know. Maybe I was jealous.

TOMMY

(gobsmacked)

That's -- that can't be true.

She looks him in the eye, dead serious.

SYDNEY

Your relationship with her was so sweet and innocent. I just -- I wanted that for myself.

(realizing)

That's probably why I did that thing in the cafeteria today. I knew you liked her. It was mean.

TOMMY
(quietly)
Yeah, it was.

SYDNEY
Did she really sign up for NERVE to
prove something to me?
(off his silence)
What if something bad happens?

Sydney reaches across the bed for her phone. She calls Vee:

OPERATOR (ON MESSAGE)
I'm sorry. The subscriber you're
trying to reach is temporarily
unavailable --

SYDNEY
Could they have blocked her phone?

TOMMY
I don't know. Maybe.

Sydney TEXTS Vee instead.

SYDNEY:
R u ok????

Sydney waits. Tommy sits down close to her to watch the phone. And wait. Finally a text pops up.

VEE:
No. i need help.

Sydney types back.

SYDNEY:
Where r u? we'll come get u

VEE:
Who is we?

SYDNEY:
Me and tommy

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION -- NIGHT

A COMPUTER MONITOR -- FULL FRAME -- VEE'S ICLOUD ACCOUNT.

Under **Me and tommy** someone unseen types back:

VEE:
No tommy. Just u. nerve rule.

SYDNEY:
Ok. Where do i go?

We hear the click of fingers on a keyboard as words appear.

VEE:
**They won't let me tell u. car
service outside your house in 10.**

INT. SYDNEY'S HOUSE -- DOWNSTAIRS -- NIGHT

Sydney reaches for her purse and keys and jacket.

TOMMY
You're walking into a trap.

SYDNEY
I don't care. This is all my fault
and she's my best friend --

TOMMY
Let's call the police.

SYDNEY
And tell them what? I don't know
where she is.

There's a HONK outside. Sydney heads for the door.

TOMMY
I'll follow your taxi --

SYDNEY
(turning back)
Don't. Please Tommy. I just want to
find Vee and bring her home.

EXT. LORILLARD PLACE -- BELMONT, BRONX -- NIGHT

A sketchy neighborhood. Low income row houses. Shady characters. Nowhere two middle class kids should be at this hour. Vee and Ian wait in the parked Mustang.

VEE
What are we doing here?

Vee's phone CHIMES. She reads the TEXT.

VEE (CONT'D)
WAIT OUTSIDE LORILLARD PLACE
FOR A BURGUNDY CUTLASS.
BUY TWO HITS OF MOLLY FOR \$40.
(MORE)

VEE (CONT'D)

IAN CAN FILM YOU ACROSS STREET.

(realizing)

I have to buy drugs. Did you tell them? About my dad?

IAN

What? No! I swear I didn't.

VEE

So they randomly picked this dare --

IAN

Vee. You have to believe me. I had nothing to do with this.

VEE

My mom would kill me.

IAN

Don't do it. I'll drive you home. It's not worth it.

Ian turns the ignition key. Vee turns it off, crying.

VEE

It's better than telling her I lost that money.

(realizing)

I don't have any money. Can you loan me forty bucks?

IAN

No, I don't want you to do this.

VEE

Please, Ian. Loan me the money.

INT. MONTEFIORE HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

A police officer -- OFFICER WILLIS (40s) and SPECIAL AGENT JOE RIVERA (40s) walk down the hall to the Nurse's Station --

Where Nancy, wrecked, fills out a POLICE REPORT.

OFFICER WILLIS

Miss Smith? This is Special Agent Joe Rivera with the Cyber Crimes Division.

JOE RIVERA

I know it's been a tough night for you. I investigate computer intrusions like these every day --

NANCY

Look, my daughter's playing a game.
called NERVE. They stole the money -

JOE RIVERA

We're aware of NERVE, Ma'am. We've
got a special task force trying to
shut it down.

NANCY

How can this be legal?

JOE RIVERA

It isn't. They're encouraging
minors to commit crimes --

NANCY

Who is they?

JOE RIVERA

We don't know yet, but we're
getting close. New York is round
three of the game. It started in
Seattle and we were completely
caught off guard. Round two in
Chicago -- we tracked down the
server but by then they'd erased
the web site.

NANCY

(frustrated)

So they're smarter than you guys.

Rivera stiffens and exchanges a look with the Cop.

NANCY (CONT'D)

I did the math. \$19.99 times a
hundred thousand Watchers --

JOE RIVERA

It's a lot of money.

NANCY

So why do they need my daughter's
college money on top of that?

JOE RIVERA

In general, hackers aren't after
money. They want to make a point --

NANCY

What point?! That kids are stupid?

JOE RIVERA

Maybe. NERVE uses all the information kids post online to manipulate them. Maybe they're trying to teach kids a lesson.

NANCY

Are they trying to teach me a lesson, too?

EXT. LORILLARD PLACE -- NIGHT

Vee waits on the corner. Hands shoved in her pockets. Nervous. Two GANGBANGER KIDS skateboard by her, laughing.

GANGBANGER

Go home, Little Girl. 'fore you get hurt.

ANGLE ON

Ian in the Mustang diagonally across the street. Watching. He glances up the street and sees a BURGUNDY CUTLASS coming. He nods to Vee and flips the phone to RECORD.

POV VEE'S IPHONE CAMERA:

VEE, nyc

****BONUS DARE****

9,639 WATCHERS

IAN (O.S.)

Here we go. That's the Cutlass.

The Cutlass stops at the corner near Vee and rolls down the shotgun window. Vee moves toward it, several feet away.

IAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Just don't get in the car.

IN THE CUTLASS

The drug dealer CHASE (20s, mixed race, muscular) is aggressive and intimidating. All around no bullshit.

CHASE

Relax, I'm not giving out joy rides. This is all business. But you gotta get in the car.

VEE

I can't. I'm sorry --

CHASE

We can do this quick and easy.
(his cell rings)
C'mon I gotta go. Get in.

VEE

I can't. I'm sorry --

CHASE

(now angry)
Hey, who gave you my number?

VEE

(stammering)
A friend.

CHASE

Then your friend should have told
you. You don't waste my time.

VEE

I'm not. I have the money --

She approaches the open window with two crumpled twenties.

CHASE

Are you stupid, Bitch?! Get in the
fucking car. Now!

Chase leans across and opens the shotgun door.

Vee can barely breathe. She gets in the car.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Close the door!

She closes it.

ANGLE ON IAN

IAN

No, don't. Shit.

IN THE CUTLASS

CHASE

Gimme the money.

She does. Chase pockets it and digs in a backpack filled
with every kind of drug in vials and baggies.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Your friend shoulda known better. I
don't do high school kids.

ANGLE ON IAN

IAN
You're done. Get out of the car.

IN THE CUTLASS

Chase hands her a baggie with TWO LITTLE WHITE PILLS.

CHASE
Put that in your pocket.
(she does)
And don't say where you got it and
don't give any of your little
friends my number.

VEE
I won't.

As Vee gets out of the car --

An UNMARKED VEHICLE swerves around the corner and heads off
the Cutlass. Two UNDERCOVER NARCS -- GOMEZ and KLIER --
descend with guns drawn.

KLIER
(to Vee)
Hands in the air where I can see
them. Step up onto the curb.

Vee puts her hands in the air and moves to the curb.
Simultaneously, Gomez trains his gun on Chase.

GOMEZ
Lower the window.
(Chase does)
Hands out where I can see them.

ACROSS THE STREET

In a panic, Ian leaps out of the car and races across the
street.

IAN
Wait! You don't understand! We're
playing a game.

Vee looks to Ian, terrified tears streaming down her face.

KLIER
Son, you need to clear the area.
(into his radio)
This is Klier, drug bust at
Lorillard.
(MORE)

KLIER (CONT'D)

Buyer's a girl, probably a minor.
I'll need a female officer to
search her --

IAN

It was a dare. She did it on a
dare.

KLIER

Doesn't matter why she did it.
Possession of a controlled
substance is a felony.

ON CHASE AND GOMEZ

CHASE

You got a warrant?

GOMEZ

The judge is waiting up for my
call. Out of the car. Now.

ANGLE ON KLIER, VEE AND IAN

KLIER

(firmly)
Step back, Son. I mean it.
(Ian does, to Vee)
Show me what you bought.

Her hand shaking, Vee produces the baggie.

VEE

I wasn't gonna take it.

KLIER

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ask me if I care.
(taking out cuffs)
Hands behind your back, Ma'am.

Vee puts her hands behind her back. CLICK. CLICK. Klier
cuffs her and walks her toward the unmarked car. Ian follows.

IAN

Can I come with her?

KLIER

Nope. Just her.

IAN

Can I give her her phone?

Ian holds it out. Klier takes it.

KLIER

Thanks, that'll come in handy.

Klier pockets the phone and opens the back door, somewhat roughly pushing Vee inside. He slams the door.

Ian talks to Vee through the window.

IAN

I'll follow you, okay?

She nods, her face tear-streaked, desperate.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- VEE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Joe Rivera sits at Vee's desktop computer, running ad software. Nancy perches behind him.

JOE RIVERA

I want to see if there's a RAT on her computer.

NANCY

A rat?

JOE RIVERA

It stands for REMOTE ADMINISTRATION TOOL. It gives a hacker access to the person's files, their microphone, their web camera.

NANCY

Are you saying someone's been watching my daughter?

JOE RIVERA

Possibly. Teen girls are a major target. These hackers create what they call RAT slaves, then trade them in on-line chat rooms.

NANCY

That's the sickest thing I've ever heard. Why don't people know about this?

JOE RIVERA

They don't want to know. We're all gonna look back ten years from now at Twitter and Facebook and thisism and we're gonna wonder how we could be so stupid -- to put all that private information online.

The ad software spits out a report, detecting **DarkComet**.

JOE RIVERA (CONT'D)
DarkComet. There it is.

NANCY
What does that mean?

JOE RIVERA
Someone sent your daughter a link
that downloaded this malware onto
her hard drive. If I can trace that
link back to a server, I can
geotrack our perp.

INT. 26TH PRECINCT -- NIGHT

CLOSE SHOTS. QUICK CUTS. Vee's fingertips are rolled in ink
and pressed against a card. FLASH, FLASH. She's photographed
face on and in profile, holding her ID number card.

Tears streak her face as she dials on a land line.

VEE
(quaking)
Mom?

IN THE BULLPEN

Vee sits at Detective Klier's desk. One hand cuffed to the
desk. She's done crying for now. But still in shock. Her eyes
settle on a FEMALE COP reading *The New York Times*. A dream
deferred, maybe forever. A CHIME rouses her. It's her --

CELL PHONE sitting on the desk in a plastic bag. Vee glances
around. Slides her free hand over it and flips it over.

NERVE:
CONGRATULATIONS, VEE.
YOU WON \$20,000.
YOU HAVE 1,567 NEW WATCHERS.

A light smile crosses her face. Detective Klier walks over
with a prosecutor SASHA STRAUS (28) and a plea form.

KLIER
This is Sasha Straus. She's with
the Manhattan D.A.'s office.

SASHA STRAUS
We've been building a case against
Mr. Franklin for several months.
(MORE)

SASHA STRAUS (CONT'D)

If you play nice and testify in court, we'll reduce the charge to attempted possession of narcotics with a two hundred dollar fine.

VEE

Thank you so much.

Klier unlocks the handcuff and places the typed in plea form in front of her on the desk.

KLIER

We'll need your autograph.

EXT. 26TH PRECINCT -- NIGHT

Nancy's sad old MUSTANG is parked in the loading zone, HAZARD LIGHTS FLASHING. Vee and Nancy walk out together in silence.

IAN (O.S.)

Vee?

Vee turns back to find Ian -- waiting for her.

NANCY

Get in the car.

VEE

Can I just -?

NANCY

GET IN THE CAR. NOW.

Vee throws a silent goodbye back at Ian and heads for the car. Nancy keeps moving, but turns back, coming at Ian.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You're lucky I don't wring your neck! My daughter could have died on that bridge! Shame on you!

Off Ian, speechless --

EXT. RIVERDALE TENEMENT -- NIGHT

Nancy and Vee get out of the parked Mustang. Silence, tension. Vee lags behind Nancy as they head for the stairs. Joe Rivera is on his way down, leaving. He's excited.

JOE RIVERA

The guy took the bait. His name's Phil Monahan.

(MORE)

JOE RIVERA (CONT'D)

Turns out he's some middle-aged nobody with a wife and kids in Lincoln, Nebraska. We have a search warrant and a SWAT team in place for tonight.

NANCY

Will I get my money back?

JOE RIVERA

That's the idea. And by tomorrow, you can have your privacy back.

Rivera heads for his car and climbs in.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Nancy unlocks the door. She instantly sees the baskets of laundry untouched. Behind her, Vee can feel it.

VEE

Mom, I'll do the laundry --

NANCY

I'll do it.

VEE

Can I say one thing?

NANCY

No. Not now. I'm gonna take a Tylenol P.M. and we're both going to bed. Maybe this was all a bad dream. If it wasn't, I can't wait to hear your explanation tomorrow.

Nancy enters her bedroom and closes the door. Off Vee alone --

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- VEE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Vee walks in her bedroom. Dark, but lit by the computer screen displaying the NERVE web site. She closes the WINDOW and SHUTS DOWN the computer.

Vee lies on her bed, curled in a ball, her eyes vacant. There's a soft HUM and a bluish light hits her eyes. It's the computer turning on. Someone is operating it remotely. A RAT. Vee sits up and shivers. A MESSAGE pops up:

**NERVE:
CONGRATULATIONS, VEE!
YOU COMPLETED ALL FIVE DARES
(MORE)**

NERVE: (CONT'D)
AND YOU HAVE 14,326 WATCHERS!
YOU QUALIFY FOR THE FINAL ROUND.
(in a twinkling star)
GRAND PRIZE:
FOUR YEAR SCHOLARSHIP TO NYU

VEE
You think I'm that stupid?

Vee charges at the computer and yanks the power chord out of the wall. *There.*

Vee's cell phone CHIMES. She reaches for it. A TEXT from Sydney with a VIDEO CLIP. She plays it down.

INFRARED VIDEO of pitch black room, hard to make out anything. We hear Sydney saying:

SYDNEY (O.S.)
I'm looking for Vee Smith.

Then a door opens letting in a sliver of light as Sydney makes her way into the room.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Is she in here? Vee?

The door closes behind her. Sydney tries the door. Locked.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Wait. What is this? Vee?! Can you hear me?!

Sydney hears the CLUNK of hydraulics start to move around her. She looks up.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Oh God! Is that an elevator?
(banging on the door)
Somebody?! Let me out!

The CLIP stops abruptly. Vee is horrified. The silence is deafening. A TEXT pops up on the phone.

NERVE:
ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?

Vee shudders. She picks up her land line and dials **9-1-1**.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
9-1-1, please state your emergency.

Vee speaks quickly and quietly, so her mother won't hear.

VEE

My best friend's in an elevator
shaft about to get crushed --

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Caller, I need your location.

VEE

That's the thing. I don't know
where she is. She went to find me
and they tricked her --

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Slow down. Who is they?

VEE

NERVE. It's a game. No one knows
who they are --

OPERATOR (O.S.)

This is about a game?

VEE

No, it's real --

OPERATOR (O.S.)

It's illegal to prank call 9-1-1.
Are you aware of that?

Vee hangs up the phone. Her eyes sting with angry tears. She
stares at the TEXT: **ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?**

Vee TYPES back a response: **p-l-a-y-e-r.**

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Vee scribbles a note and leaves it on the dining room table.
She sneaks out the front door, closing it softly behind her.

EXT. RIVERDALE TENEMENT -- NIGHT

Vee hurries down the stairs and unlocks her bike.

EXT. RIVERDALE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Vee bikes through the quiet streets at top speed.

EXT. VAN CORTLANDT PARK -- NIGHT

Vee chains her bike to a traffic signs and races upstairs.

INT. ONE TRAIN (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Vee rides the ONE Train. Vee checks her watch in a panic.

**NERVE:
TAKE THE BROADWAY LOCAL
TO COLUMBUS CIRCLE**

INT. COLUMBUS CIRCLE TRAIN STATION -- NIGHT

Vee races through the labyrinth of tunnels, dodging people.

**NERVE:
TAKE THE C LINE
TO 51ST STREET**

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE -- NIGHT

Vee runs up Lexington as fast as she can.

**NERVE:
THERE'S A TRAMWAY AT
59TH & SECOND AVENUE**

EXT. TRAMWAY (59TH & 2ND AVE) -- NIGHT

Vee runs top speed to the TRAM parked in the station.

**NERVE:
TAKE THE 11:54 TRAM
TO ROOSEVELT ISLAND**

INSIDE THE TRAM

BING-BONG. Vee jumps onto the tram just as the doors close. Her eyes quickly find --

IAN across the car. He's shocked to see her. But it's not safe to talk. Aside from a few CIVILIANS, the tram car holds the NERVE FINALISTS, who eye each other with contempt.

CHLOE -- Ian's former partner and the girl who tormented Nancy at the hospital. She's now paired up with --

TY -- who grins at Vee and waves. *Me again.* Ty is the frat boy who harassed them on the bridge. That was a dare.

JEN -- the Asian girl with the pink Mohawk who shoplifted the nail polish. Her girlfriend and NERVE partner MICKI (21) is heavily pierced and tatted up. They make a striking couple.

Most conspicuous is a guy in a YELLOW SMILEY FACE MASK. A knit cap pulled down over his face with a ghoulish grin. He holds an old-fashioned TIN LUNCH BOX.

TY
(re: lunch box)
You think there's a bomb in there?

Ian and Vee trade a look.

EXT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND TRAMWAY -- NIGHT

--the TRAM climbs the metal pulley, up over the East River.

INT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND TRAM -- NIGHT

As the TRAM ascends, Vee makes her way over to Ian.

IAN
Are you okay?

VEE
No. Can I get a hug?

Ian smiles and pulls her into a hug. For Vee, it was a ploy.

VEE (CONT'D)
(whispering in his ear)
I'm here for Sydney. Nerve has her.

Vee's phone CHIMES. She gently pulls away to read the TEXT:

**NERVE:
PUT YOUR CELL PHONE
IN THE LUNCHBOX.
YOU WILL GET IT BACK
AT THE END OF THE GAME.**

She shows it to Ian.

IAN
(quietly)
A phone can be tracked.

Ian's phone BUZZES. One by one, each of the NERVE finalists receive the same text. They confer with their counterparts. Smiley Face opens the empty lunchbox and holds it out.

Ty drops his phone in. THUNK. Chloe hesitates and tells Ty:

CHLOE
(re: phone)
This is my life.

TY
I'll buy you a new one.

Chloe tosses it in the lunch box. THUNK. Jen and Micki argue quietly until Jen grabs Micki's cell phone drops them in. THUNK, THUNK. Vee and Ian remain.

Ian drops his in. THUNK. Everyone watches Vee.

CHLOE
(to Ian)
Looks like you picked the wrong girl.

Vee glowers at Chloe and drops her phone in the lunchbox. THUNK. Ty pulls Chloe into a bear hug. She squeals. Ty throws a dark grin at Ian, as if to say: *she's mine now*.

TY
Hey, sorry about that thing on the bridge. I did win a flat screen TV and they teamed me up with this tasty treat.

IAN
Congratulations. You guys are made for each other.

Chloe's smile flickers at the obvious dig. Ian gets a **TEXT**.

NERVE:
NO WEAPONS FROM HERE ON
PUT YOUR KNIFE IN THE LUNCH BOX

Smiley Face opens the lunch box to him. Ian huffs, pulls out his knife and drops it in.

TY
(mock impressed)
Check it out. He's a badass.

EXT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Industrial area. The clan of Finalists follow Smiley Face.

TY
(singing)
I'M PHI ALPHA BORN
AND I'M PHI ALPHA BRED
(MORE)

TY (CONT'D)
 AND WHEN I DIE
 I'LL BE PHI ALPHA DEAD!
 (to Smiley Face)
 Yo, Smiley! Are we there yet?

Smiley Face stops at the front door and rings the buzzer.

INT. TOMMY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON a Google search. Someone types: **WWW.NERVEGAME.COM**

Tommy opens the NERVE web site. A banner reads:

NYC FINAL ROUND with a digital clock counting down **29:26...**

Underneath are the FINALISTS, their faces all in a row.

IAN, VEE, TY, CHLOE, JEN, MICKI and **SYD**

Sydney?! Tommy's jaw slackens. *What the hell is going on?*
 Tommy grabs his cell phone and dials Sydney.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
 I'm sorry. The cellular customer
 you are calling is not available --

TOMMY
 (hanging up)
 Damn it. Sydney, what are you doing?

He gets an idea and types into the constantly scrolling
 WATCHER COMMENTS:

Tommy: i thought syd was eliminated.
sk8er boi: did you see that ass?!
Foxy: catfight! Catfight!
sk8er boi: or threesome with chloe!

Tommy's disgusted. Shaken. Worried. He clicks on a **TICKET
 ICON** under the final round banner. Another window pops up:

CONGRATULATIONS, TOMMY!
WELCOME TO THE FINAL ROUND!
PLEASE ENTER YOUR CREDIT CARD
AND CELL NUMBER AND WE WILL
TEXT YOU THE ADDRESS.
ADMITS ONE. NONTRANSFERABLE.
BRING PHOTO ID.

We see the form for a credit card and the cost: **\$1000.**

In an angry haze, Tommy pulls out his wallet.

INT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND WAREHOUSE -- "THE RED ROOM" -- NIGHT

A lounge of sorts with red mirrored walls, plush velvet chaises, a wet bar and a giant LED screen on the front wall. In the middle of the room is a LARGE ANTHRACITE CASE on a table. As Smiley Face ushers them inside, Ty immediately beelines for the box and tries to open it. Locked. Smiley Face closes the door behind them.

ON THE LED SCREEN

An ANIMATED EMOTICON appears. Our Wizard of Oz. He speaks in a digitized voice, utterly inhuman. It reverberates off the glass walls from portable speakers perched around the room.

EMOTICON

And then there were six... Welcome to the Final Round. You've played as teams up until now. But only one can be the winner. Any questions?

TY

What's in the box?

EMOTICON

Patience, Ty. It's a virtue.

Micki giggles. Jen shoots her a look to shut it.

JEN

(to the Emoticon)

Where are the Watchers?

EMOTICON

We'll bring you into the arena in a moment. But first, how about a drink to break the ice? The bar is fully stocked. For every drink you consume, we'll add a thousand dollar bonus. So -- bottoms up!

Naughty Boy's "LA LA LA" pounds through the speakers. Ian and Vee hang back. Ty pulls Chloe toward the bar. Jen and Micki follow suit.

MICKI

My girlfriend's a bartender.

Ty sizes up Jen with a nasty grin.

TY

Why am I not surprised?

Jen passes him to the LIQUOR CABINET.

JEN
What does that mean?

TY
Girl bartenders are always dykes.
It's like -- a thing.

Jen surveys the cabinet full of liquor: Bourbon, tequila, whiskey, rum, Bailey's Irish Cream.

JEN
So I guess, since you're a frat boy, you must be a rapist.

TY
(laughs darkly)
Not with you, I'm not.

ON VEE AND IAN

VEE
(quietly)
How do I find Sydney?

IAN
Do you even know if she's here?

VEE
No. I don't know anything.

As Jen refills the empty glasses, Ty yells to Vee and Ian.

TY
You think you're better than us?

IAN
Vee has to go to the bathroom.

EMOTICON
No she doesn't. She's looking for Sydney.

JEN
Who's Sydney?

Shaking, Vee approaches the LED screen.

VEE
Where is she? Is she here?

The Emoticon grins and disappears.

VEE (CONT'D)

I know she came here looking for me. I want to talk to her.

JEN

What the hell is going on?

Vee approaches the blank screen. Talks to it.

VEE

You know I was arrested tonight. I told the cops everything.

(bluffing)

They put a tracking device on me. They're gonna be here any minute --

TY

(charging her)

You little bitch. If you blow this for me --

Ian steps in front of Ty.

IAN

Don't touch her.

TY

You lost your weapon, tough guy. You think you can take me?

Chloe pulls Ty back.

CHLOE

Ty, don't. We'll lose the game.

JEN

Maybe this is the game.

Vee scans the room, sees CAMERAS rigged in all four corners.

VEE

They're watching us.

TY

No shit. And we don't get to see them?

VEE

They don't want to be seen.

EXT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

There's a line down the block and around the corner of rowdy kids waiting to get in. One by one, they show Smiley Face their ID as he checks them off a digital guest list on an iPad. FIND TOMMY in the line...

INT. "RED ROOM" -- NIGHT

The contestants are fairly inebriated. Empty glasses and bottles in evidence on the bar. Micki counts her empties.

MICKI

Did I drink five or six?

Jen throws an arm around her.

JEN

You did good, Baby. That's our airfare to Thailand.

MICKI

Really? We're actually going?!

Micki kisses her on the mouth. Ty makes a gagging sound.

The Emoticon reappears.

EMOTICON

We're about to head out to the arena, Players. But first, you're all good at dare -- how about a game of truth? Let's start with Jen. Tell Micki the truth about Tanya Bauer.

Micki looks at Jen, aghast. Jen instantly knows she's fucked.

TY

Uh-oh. Dyke drama.

MICKI

You slept with Tanya Bauer?

JEN

No. We made out one night, that's all. I swear --

MICKI

I don't believe you.

JEN

I didn't want to hurt you.

MICKI

Screw you. I'm out of here. I
didn't even want to play this game.

Micki heads for the door. Locked. She pounds on it.

MICKI (CONT'D)

Let me out of here!

VEE

Let her out!

TY

She quits. She's out of the game.

CHLOE

(gesturing)

There's another door over here.

Micki crosses to the SECOND DOOR and tries it. Locked.

EMOTICON

Your turn, Vee. How much do you
think you know about Ian?

Off Ian, now pale --

VEE

(cagey)

Nothing. We just met.

EMOTICON

Isn't he your boyfriend?

VEE

No. I don't know. I mean, I like
him, but -- we just met.

EMOTICON

That's true. You don't even know
his real name.

Vee pales and stares at Ian, waiting. They all are.

IAN

(heart pounding)

It's Adam Davis.

EMOTICON

Tell her why you're here.

(NOTE: Ian will now be referred to as Adam.) Adam swallows
hard. He desperately doesn't want to do this.

ADAM

Vee, I really like you --

EMOTICON

No prologue. Get to the point.

VEE

Yeah, get to the point.

ADAM

I'm from Seattle --

EMOTICON

Careful, Adam. Too much detail will not serve you here.

ADAM

(with difficulty)

NERVE promised me fifty grand if I got you here.

Vee is gobsmacked. Wounded. Humiliated. None of it was real.

VEE

So the whole thing was bullshit.

(guessing)

You probably don't even have a brother.

ADAM

(pained)

No. A sister. I'm sorry, Vee --

VEE

(to the Emoticon)

Why? Why me?

EMOTICON

Why not you?

TY

So he won fifty grand?!

(to Adam)

You lucky bitch.

ADAM

(to Vee)

This wasn't about money. I swear --

EMOTICON

Vee, would you like a new partner for the final round?

VEE
Yes I would.

ADAM
No, you don't want to do this.

EMOTICON
Adam, you're excused --

Smiley Face unlocks the door.

ADAM
No. I won't leave her here --

EMOTICON
Then you forfeit your money.

ADAM
I don't care --

Three guys in SMILEY FACE masks push into the room and grab Adam dragging him out.

ADAM (CONT'D)
(to Vee)
This isn't what you think it is!

The door slams shut behind him.

EMOTICON
Would you like to meet your new partner, Vee?

MICKI
She can have Jen. I want out.

The SECOND DOOR opens and Sydney rushes in. She's a mess. Cheeks tear-stained, hair disheveled, clothes damp and dirty.

SYDNEY
Vee!

The two girls embrace and hold onto each other and whisper --

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Get me out of here.

VEE
I will. I swear.

JEN
So that's Sydney.

TY
(remembering)
The girl with the ass.

EMOTICON
In a moment, we will head out to
the arena, but first -- the box.

TY
(mutters)
Finally...

EMOTICON
Ty, in the liquor cabinet, there's
a key. Why don't you go get it?

TY
(moving to the bar)
Do I get brownie points for this?

Ty finds the key and walks back to the box.

EMOTICON
Now open it.

As Ty unlocks the box, the others move in to see. He lifts
the lid to reveal --

SIX SMITH & WESSON REVOLVERS in a red velvet display case,
each with a tape label bearing the name of a contestant.
Including **Syd**.

TY
Holy crap. Are they loaded?

JEN
No way. They wouldn't do that.

SYDNEY
Wait, why is my name on one?

VEE
(stunned)
Because. This was their plan all
along.

EMOTICON
Players, take your guns.

Ty takes one and admires the gleaming weapon. Chloe reaches
for a gun and poses with her arms outstretched.

CHLOE
Do I look like a Bond girl?

TY

Totally.

SYDNEY

I don't want to do this.

VEE

We're not doing it.

Jen moves to Micki and confers quietly.

JEN

Hey, I love you. I don't want to lose you. Let's finish this thing, and I swear, I'll never look at another girl.

Tears stream down Micki's face. She wants to believe her. Jen pulls her in close. Seductive. Micki can't resist.

JEN (CONT'D)

(quietly, kissing her)

Let's just win this thing so we can quit our jobs and go to Thailand.

Micki succumbs. Jen leads her over. They both take pistols.

EMOTICON

Sydney and Vee. Are you Players or Watchers?

VEE

Neither. We want out.

EMOTICON

That's not an option. Think about your Watchers. They bet thousands of dollars on you --

VEE

That's their problem.

EMOTICON

We think you'll play.

VEE

Why don't you come out and tell me that to my face? Or maybe you're not a player. Maybe you just like to watch. You get kids to do sick things for money and prizes 'cause it turns you on. Where's your Nerve? Come out of your foxhole.

A TELEPHONE STARTS TO RING. Through cheap speakers in the room. Nobody knows what's going on. After three rings --

NANCY (O.S.)
(groggy)
Hello?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Ms. Smith, this is Detective Claire Quilty, NYPD Homicide division.

VEE
Mom?!

But Nancy can't hear her.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Are you the mother of Venus Smith?

NANCY
Yes! Oh God, what's happened?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(sombre)
Ma'am, I have some bad news to deliver --

NANCY (O.S.)
No! PLEASE, NO!

VEE
MOM! THEY'RE LYING!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
I'm terribly sorry, Ma'am, but I'm going to need you to come down to the City Morgue to identify the body.

Nancy wails. Inconsolable. Nonsensical.

VEE
MOM! I'M RIGHT HERE! I'M ALIVE!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Ask for Detective Claire Quilty when you get here. Again, I'm so sorry for your loss.

CLICK. DIAL TONE. Vee collapses on Sydney in a fit of sobs. Then charges the LED screen, pounding on it with her fists.

VEE
You Monsters! Call her back!

A question appears on the screen:

ARE YOU A WATCHER OR A PLAYER?

Vee shakes as she backs away. Again, they're making her play.

EMOTICON
What's it going to be?

VEE
(shattered)
I'm a Player.

Vee takes the pistol labeled **VEE**. She looks at Sydney.

VEE (CONT'D)
We have to play.

SYDNEY
I don't want to.

Vee grabs Sydney's gun and brings it to over.

VEE
Just hold it. That's all you have
to do.

Vee holds out the gun to Sydney, who reluctantly takes it.

MICKI
(losing it)
Are we really going to shoot each
other?

The questions hangs in the air, silencing everyone.

The LIGHTS SUDDENLY GO OUT. PITCH BLACK.

TY
What's happening?

BANG! A gun goes off.

MICKI
Jen?!

JEN
I'm okay!

TY
Who did that!?

Suddenly the LIGHTS COME ON. They all look around for who's hit. And everyone's still standing. But Chloe's face is contorted in a silent scream. She can barely breathe.

CHLOE

I got scared...I didn't mean to...

TY

You're okay. You didn't hit anyone.

Ty moves toward her and puts an arm around her.

TY (CONT'D)

You didn't hit anyone. You're fine.

VEE

She's not fine. Chloe, put the gun down.

EMOTICON

Players. Go to the opposite side of the room from your partner.

They reluctantly do as they're told.

EMOTICON (CONT'D)

Now point your gun at your partner.

MICKI

What?! No! I'm not doing that.

CHLOE

Ty? What should I do?

TY

See that latch? That's the safety. Put it on.

Chloe does. Micki starts to hyperventilate.

Jen raises her gun at Micki. She nods to Micki that it's okay. Do it. Micki shudders and raises her gun.

Vee and Sydney eye each other, shaken. Vee levels her gun at Sydney.

VEE

Please. Do it so we can go home.

Shaking, Sydney raises her gun.

A COUNTDOWN starts on the LED screen from **30** seconds down.

EMOTICON

The first pair to shoot each other
wins the game.

TY

What?!

MICKI

Oh God.

Jen's heart pounds. She gets an idea.

JEN

We don't have to kill each other.
Aim for my feet.

MICKI

What?!

JEN

Come on, we'll both do it and we'll
win the game!

MICKI

No!

TY

(to Chloe)
Maybe we should do that.

CHLOE

What if I miss?!

JEN

Come on, Micki, think Thailand.

15, 14, 13... Micki's in tears.

JEN (CONT'D)

Just do it. We can win this.

Micki fingers the trigger. So does Jen.

TY

(to Chloe)
We're gonna lose --

JEN

On three. One, two, three --

Both pull the trigger. BANG! BANG! But neither go down.

JEN (CONT'D)

Wait, what happened?

TY
They were blanks!

He laughs and relaxes.

TY (CONT'D)
(to Chloe)
I told you we'd be fine.

VEE
They're blanks?

JEN
We won the game!

Jen and Micki embrace. Vee and Sydney relax.

TY
Damn! We shoulda shot each other.

SYDNEY
(moving to Vee)
Can we go home now?

VEE
I guess...

Vee eyes the pistol in her hand.

SYDNEY
Vee? What's wrong?

VEE
(realizing)
My gun. It's heavier than yours.

Vee levels the gun at the MIRRORRED WALL and pulls the trigger. BANG! The wall SHATTERS. Revealing HUNDREDS OF KIDS on the other side. BANG! BANG! BANG!

Vee shoots out the OTHER THREE WALLS in quick succession.

Suddenly on the spot and freaked out, the Watchers start to back away. Vee points her gun at them and screams --

VEE (CONT'D)
What's wrong? You don't want to play?

EMOTICON
Players, put down your guns.

The Watchers freeze as Vee scans the room with her gun. The other contestants eye the Watchers in shock.

VEE

You had your fun, watching a bunch
of kids shoot each other for money?
How many of you guys bet on me?

A quarter of the hands go up.

VEE (CONT'D)

Sorry, you lose. So do I. Big
time. I lost my dignity, my best
friend, my college money --

EMOTICON

Vee, stop. Or we can make life very
unpleasant for you.

The other players set their guns down. All except Vee.

VEE

(to the Emoticon)

I'm done with your threats. They
won't work anymore. They deserve to
hear the truth.

(to the crowd)

This isn't a TV show. This is real
life. And apparently these are real
bullets. But only in my gun. NERVE
wanted to see if they could push me
over the edge.

SYDNEY

Is that true? Why you?

VEE

Because it makes a great story.
Straight A student, college bound,
shoots best friend during deadly
game. It would go viral overnight.
And then they set up the game in
London, Tokyo, Berlin.

The Watchers pale and shift uncomfortably. Exchanging looks.

FIND TOMMY in the crowd. Filming Vee on his phone, capturing
this moment to post later. Fuck Nerve.

VEE (CONT'D)

You know that app you guys
downloaded to follow us? NERVE now
has your texts, your e-mails, all
your contacts, not to mention your
credit card information --

Some kids reach for their phones to erase the app.

VEE (CONT'D)

I'm not the victim of this game.
You are. And you don't even know
it.

EMOTICON

You lost the game, Vee. It's over.

BANG! Vee shoots the LED screen. It SPARKS and BLINKS before shutting down -- with a smoking hole in the center. Some of the Watchers laugh; a few applaud.

VEE

Then come into the light where we
can see you. We all want to know
who's the mastermind behind NERVE.
Are you a Watcher or a Player?

EXT. MIDWESTERN RANCH HOUSE -- NIGHT

A VAN pulls up across the street and a SWAT team pours out, suited up, armed. They circle a rundown ranch house with kid stuff in the yard. A Big Wheels. A girl's tricycle. A rusty pick-up truck. The house, dark and quiet.

INT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Tommy pushes his way upstream through the crowd to get to Vee and Sydney. When Sydney sees him, she lights up and moves to meet him. He pulls her into a tight hug.

EXT. MIDWESTERN RANCH HOUSE -- NIGHT

The SWAT team is in position. The TEAM LEADER gives the call:

TEAM LEADER

Now, now, now!

The SWAT team charges in the front door and the back door:

SWAT TEAM

Swat Team! Get out, get out!

We hear children screaming, then a man, then a woman.

EXT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

POLICE CARS circle the warehouse, now barricaded. Cops talk to some of the kids, including Ty, Jen, Micki.

FIND VEE walking through the mayhem in SLOW MOTION. Taking it all in. SOUND falls away as her VOICE OVER rises.

VEE (V.O.)
We take so much for granted.
Safety. Privacy. Trust.

Her eyes fall on Ian -- well, Adam -- speaking to a cop. His eyes beseech her to stay and talk, but Vee's gaze is clear. *It's over. Stay away from me.*

INT. MIDWESTERN RANCH HOUSE -- COMPUTER ROOM -- NIGHT

The SWAT Leader holds Phil Monahan at gunpoint as he turns on his computer. He's a doughy, middle-aged man.

VEE (V.O.)
Especially in a place like Lincoln,
Nebraska. The "Nerve Center."

As the computer screen boots up, they all wait. Phil's hands shake as he types in his account password. When the screen boots up, an FBI AGENT sits at the monitor and starts to search the hard drive.

VEE (V.O.)
Poor Phil Monahan didn't know what
hit him. It turns out the
mastermind behind NERVE barely ever
used his computer.

SCAN THE FACES of Phil, his hippy WIFE, his SON and DAUGHTER.

VEE (V.O.)
NERVE had hijacked his hard drive
and turned it into a zombie to
mislead the Feds. Phil was a victim
of NERVE, just like the rest of us.

I/E. TOMMY'S CAR (DRIVING) - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

In the back seat, Vee watches the city roll by out the window. She looks older, wiser.

VEE (V.O.)
I thought nerve was about being
daring, outrageous, loud. But real
nerve is quiet.

In the front seat, Tommy drives home.

VEE (V.O.)
It's a kind of inner certainty.

Sydney rides shotgun. Tommy reaches for her hand. She squeezes his hand and smiles.

VEE (V.O.)
It's about choosing who to love,
when it makes no sense on paper.

Vee glances at the front seat, noticing their connection. She cracks a smile. *How do you like that?*

EXT. RIVERDALE TENEMENT -- NIGHT

Nancy pulls her clunky, rattling Mustang into her parking spot under the building. She gets out of the car, looking like she's been through a war.

VEE (V.O.)
Real nerve is showing up --

As Nancy approaches the stairs, she sees Vee sitting on the second floor landing. Vee gathers her courage and stands up.

VEE (V.O.)
-- when it would be easier to hide.

Nancy rushes up the stairs and hugs Vee tight. They're both in tears. The anger can wait.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL COMPUTER LAB -- DAY

CLOSE ON a computer screen. Playing a clip on YouTube. It's the video Tommy shot of Vee making her speech to the Nerve Watchers. It's gone viral. **7,234,000 VIEWS.**

VEE (V.O.)
It's about using your voice to say
"This is wrong. It needs to stop."

An average TEEN GIRL (17) watches the clip. *The next Vee.*

PULL BACK TO REVEAL dozens of TEENAGERS at computer terminals surfing the internet... From THISISME to online shopping.

VEE (V.O.)
The thing is -- there's no stopping
NERVE.

INT. FBI CYBER CRIMES DIVISION -- NIGHT

Special Agent Joe Rivera burns the midnight oil, sifting through encryption codes.

VEE (V.O.)

Even if you caught the person or people behind it. The idea is out there. And the internet is the Wild West. You can't police it. We have to police ourselves.

HARD CUT TO:

CRACK! An egg hits the edge of a pan. Its liquid spills onto the cast-iron pan, SIZZLING.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- KITCHEN -- DAY

JUMP CUTS. Vee multi-tasks breakfast. She breaks the yolk and scrambles the egg. Bacon fries in another pan. Toast pops out of the toaster. Vee slathers on butter.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- DINING AREA -- DAY

Vee lays out the perfect breakfast on the table. And pours a steaming hot cup of coffee.

Nancy opens her door, looking disoriented and bleary-eyed.

NANCY

What time is it? I have to get to work.

VEE

It's Saturday. You're off today.

Nancy takes this in and eyes the breakfast, suspicious.

NANCY

Don't think this means you're not grounded.

VEE

I don't, I promise. I want to talk for one minute without any interruption --

NANCY

Here we go --

VEE

After that, you can say whatever you want.

Nancy considers it. She heads into the kitchen and takes the EGG TIMER off the stove. She turns it to ONE MINUTE and plants it on the table. It ticks like a bomb.

NANCY

Okay. Talk.

Vee takes a deep breath. Everything is riding on this.

VEE

I know you think my being a surgeon will give me all the things you lack. Money and prestige and status. And maybe it would...

Nancy takes a deep breath and eyes the egg timer: 20 seconds.

VEE (CONT'D)

But that's your dream. Not mine.

NANCY

Time's half up.

VEE

I'm a writer. I write in my head all day long. I know you don't understand that --

NANCY

Ten seconds.

VEE

I got an internship at The New York Times this summer. The thing is, I need you to sign a permission slip.

NANCY

So that's what this is.

Vee lays the PERMISSION SLIP on the table.

VEE

You can sign it or not sign it. Either way I'm not going to be a surgeon. I'm sorry.

The egg timer DINGS. Nancy finally exhales.

NANCY

Is that it?

VEE

One more thing. I know that you love me. And you're scared for me, because life can be disappointing. And dangerous. But if I let your fear win, I will be forty years old and wondering what happened to my life.

Nancy blinks back at Vee, refusing to let this penetrate.

VEE (CONT'D)

It's The New York Times, Mom. You know, "the paper of record?" Most mothers would say, "You go, Girl!"

Vee waits. Nancy's silence is ear-splitting. Vee makes the only healthy choice. She gives up. Stands. Takes her bag.

VEE (CONT'D)

I have to get to work. I'm sorry I'm not who you wanted me to be.

Vee takes off, closing the door behind her. Nancy is alone. Deeply alone. Staring at the blank permission slip.

EXT. RIVERDALE STREETS -- DAY

It's a glorious New York day. Clear sky, dappled leaves, signs of life everywhere. Vee bikes to work, pedaling hard. The conversation wasn't a resounding win, but she told the truth. She feels lighter, free. She soars down the street.

INT. VEE'S APARTMENT -- DAY

CLOSE ON the tip of a pen on paper. Nancy signs her name on the permission slip. She tacks it to Vee's bedroom door. On top is a handwritten message: **You go, Girl**

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT -- NEW YORK TIMES BUILDING -- DAY

Several months later. A sun-dappled summer day in New York.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - CITY SECTION BULLPEN -- DAY

The City Section bullpen teems with activity. A DISHEVELED COLLEGE KID pushes the mail cart through a maze of cubicles.

FOLLOW HIM to Vee's cubicle. He delivers a brown envelope and moves on. Vee's hairstyle has changed -- bobbed, edgy.

Her clothes are retro chic, a little boyish. She knows who she is now. Vee conducts a phone interview, jotting notes, engaged.

VEE

They found the body in a dog crate?

She scribbles down: **body found in dog crate**

VEE (CONT'D)

How long had it been there?

Vee winces at the description she's getting. She looks up to find her supervisor GLENN (40s, heavyset) towering above her eating a Subway sandwich.

VEE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Can you hang on a sec?

GLENN

There's a guy downstairs for you.

VEE

The homicide cop?

(checking her watch)

He's two hours early.

INT. NEW YORK TIMES - LOBBY - DAY

The elevator doors open and Vee steps out. At the Reception Desk is "Ian." Or Adam. Vee bristles and approaches him.

VEE

What are you doing here?

ADAM

Have lunch with me and I'll explain.

VEE

Give me one good reason.

ADAM

"Life is short. From here to that old car you know so well there is a stretch of twenty, twenty-five paces. It is a very short walk. Make those twenty-five steps. Now. Right now. Come just as you are. And we shall live happily ever after."

VEE

You finished Lolita.

ADAM

The annotated version.

VEE

You must have thought that would work like gang busters.

ADAM

Yeah, that was my ace. So...
you in or out?

INT. TIMES SQUARE IHOP -- DAY

Vee and Adam sit in a booth. She puts up a cold front.

VEE

I should warn you I'm writing a story about NERVE for the Times.

ADAM

That's great, Vee --

VEE

500 Words. Based on my article for the school paper. So whatever you say is on the record. Of course, I'd have to verify it.

ADAM

Sure. I deserve that. As I told you, I played the first round in Seattle. Before anyone really knew what NERVE was. I made it to the Final Round. When the guns came out, I refused to play. And I spread the word, to warn people about NERVE. So they made my life a living hell. They dared kids to break into our house, trash our lawn, photograph my sister in the locker room. We never had any peace. Maybe I deserved it. But my family didn't. And NERVE made it clear, it was never going to stop. So I told them I'd do anything.

VEE

(realizing)

That's where I come in.

ADAM

Yes. I had to get you to the final round. I think NERVE, whoever they are, make their own bets. They pick the least likely player to win and try to break that person. It turns out you're stronger and smarter than they realized. I'm sorry, Vee. It was torture not telling you. I almost did a hundred times.

VEE

But you got what you wanted, right? NERVE set you free?

ADAM

Yes. Thing is, I didn't expect to like you for real. I went home. Tried to get back to my life. I even started dating this girl. But I kept wishing she was you. We had an epic first date. Maybe we could try "dinner and a movie."

VEE

You're not gonna turn out to be boring, are you?

Adam grins. The WAITRESS arrives with menus. When Vee opens hers, there's a note inside.

**THE GAME'S NOT OVER
UNTIL WE SAY IT'S OVER.**

Vee looks to Adam who studies the menu. *Is he in on this? Is he still playing?* She eyes TWO TOURISTS at the counter. THREE TEENS in a booth behind them. The SHORT ORDER COOK. The bored HOSTESS. *Are they watching her?* The Waitress waits on another table. *Did she do this?* Off Vee's turmoil --

SLAM TO BLACK.

DURING END CREDITS

IPHONE VIDEO - BEIJING:

A CHINESE TEEN BOY walks into a busy noodle shop and beelines for the back table where FIVE COLLEGE GIRLS eat noodles, laugh, gossip. At the top of his lungs, he yells:

CHINESE TEEN
(in Chinese)
You're the best lover I ever had!

-- and kisses the girl closest to him on the mouth, while her friends gape and gasp.

IPHONE VIDEO - MEXICO CITY:

A chubby MEXICAN GIRL walks into a crowded bar and taps a MAN on the shoulder. When he turns around --

MEXICAN GIRL
(in Spanish)
You're the best lover I ever had!

She kisses him on the mouth. He recoils and his wife sitting next to him goes apeshit, screaming at the girl in Spanish.

IPHONE VIDEO - PARIS:

In the Louvre, a FEMALE TOUR GUIDE leads a group of German Tourists through the museum. They walk toward the "Venus de Milo" sculpture.

TOUR GUIDE
(in German)
Known as the Venus de Milo from the
late Hellenistic period --

A FRENCH TEEN BOY races through the tour, shouting:

FRENCH TEEN BOY
(in French)
You're the best lover I ever had!

He grabs the tour guide and plants a giant kiss on her mouth to the amazement of the tourists.

THE GAME OF **NERVE** IS SPREADING AROUND THE WORLD...